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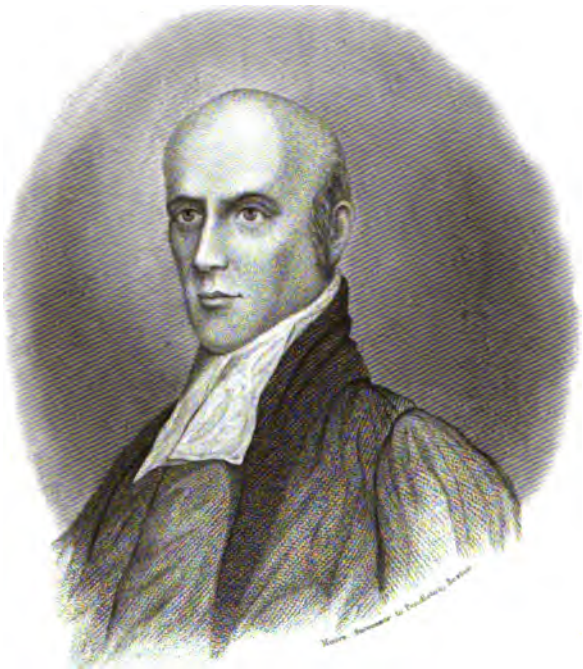

REV P JESSUP APPLETON, D.D.

President of Bowdoin College.

Gould & Newman. 1837.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I

ANDOVER:

[illegible] BY GOULD [illegible] AN.

1837.

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THE

WORKS

OF

REV. JESSE APPLETON, D. D.

LATE PRESIDENT OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE,

EMBRACING HIS

COURSE OF THEOLOGICAL LECTURES,

HIS

ACADEMIC ADDRESSES,

AND A SELECTION FROM HIS

SERMONS:

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

ANDOVER:
PUBLISHED BY GOULD AND NEWMAN.
1837.

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PREFACE.

It is well known, that the former edition of President Appleton's Theological Works embraced a part only of his course of Lectures, and a few Sermons; and that it suffered materially from want of a responsible person to superintend the publication. At the suggestion of several, whose opinions deserve great consideration, an attempt has now been made to bring before the public in a uniform edition, all his more important efforts, and to remedy defects which have been a source of regret and mortification to his friends.

The published writings of Dr. Appleton have placed him in the highest rank of the theological and ethical writers of our country. It is believed that the productions of his pen, which are now for the first time presented to the public, will not diminish his reputation. The Sermons in the former edition are retained in the present; some that were occasional in their character and were published during his life, were thought worthy of being preserved among his permanent works; and of the remainder, a few were Sabbath discourses, which, being composed for the people of his charge, may be taken as specimens of his ordinary style of preaching when in the active duties of the ministry. The Addresses, which have heretofore been confined in their circulation, for the most part, to the friends of the college, were uniformly deeply interesting at the time of their delivery; they were in general composed with much care; and whether we regard the importance of their topics or the able

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manner in which they are discussed, they are too valuable not to be circulated as widely as his name.

No preparation of his writings for the press was made by the author; and although the individual, who has assumed the responsibility of the present edition, has corrected the numerous errors of the former by a careful comparison with the manuscript copy left by the author, yet the work must claim the indulgence due to a posthumous publication. It ought to be stated, that the editor, living at a distance from the place of publication, has not been able to superintend the press. For want of such superintendence, some things of trivial importance, especially among the references, the verification of which has caused much embarrassment, have been suffered to pass, which, on a revision of the sheets, it is perceived, would better have been altered. The work, however, is now submitted to the public in a form more worthy of the author's memory, with the confident expectation that it will be regarded, not only as the result of the persevering investigations and patient thought of a clear, discriminating and powerful mind, always influenced by an ardent love of truth, but also as a valuable contribution to our literature.

It was thought important, that a more extended memoir of President Appleton's life and character, than has yet appeared, should accompany this new edition of his works. It seemed due to the friends of religion and true learning, as well as to the individual himself who shared so largely in the respect and veneration of the community, and whose memory is still fresh in many hearts, that an attempt should be made to render a more full tribute, than has yet been done, to his rare excellence.

In respect to his early history, little has been found in addition to what has been already before the public in the memoir prefixed to the former edition. The writer of the present has not scrupled to appropriate the statements, and even the language of that memoir, whenever it was to his purpose. He

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would express similar obligations to the Sketch of the Character of President Appleton, which accompanied the former edition of his Addresses. Whatever is added has been gleaned from the family and the personal friends of the President, and from his private papers, to which the writer has had free access. It is not known, that any source of valuable information has been overlooked. The writer must, however, be permitted to say, that having known the President only as a pupil and a very youthful one, he would have been gratified, could some one have been found to discharge this duty, who, from personal intimacy, could have portrayed with a more free pencil, the intellectual and moral physiognomy of the eminent subject of the memoir. He has been sustained, however, by a consciousness, that no one could have entered upon the labor with deeper interest, as well as by the consideration, that he might assert the same claim for indulgence, which was advanced with so much delicacy by an ancient classic: Hic enim liber honori *soceri mei* destinatus, professione pietatis, aut laudatus erit aut excusatus.

ALPHEUS S. PACKARD.

Bowdoin College, Dec. 1836.

*** The engraved portrait of Pres. Appleton was procured after the Memoir had passed the press. It was taken from the former engraving, some alterations having been suggested by friends, which, it is thought, have improved the likeness.

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MEMOIR.

Jesse Appleton was born Nov. 17, 1772 at New Ipswich, N. H. The genealogy of his father's family has been traced to John Appleton, Esq. of Waldingfield, Suffolk, England, who died in 1436. Samuel, a descendant from John, of the eighth generation, came to America in 1635. The fourth in the line of descent from Samuel was Francis, the father of the President. He was esteemed a truly excellent man, pious from early childhood, of vigorous intellect, and of a remarkably calm, sober disposition. He died Jan. 1816, aged 83. His wife, the mother of the President, was a woman of strong mind and devoted piety. A brother of Francis was a clergyman of some distinction in Brookfield, Mass. Mr. Francis Appleton was a farmer in the ordinary circumstances of that class of our community. So contracted indeed were his means, that the subject of this memoir was designed to a mechanic's trade; but as he manifested decided predilection for books while yet a boy, by the kind intervention of a brother, who promised to aid him in procuring a liberal education, his father was induced to send him to college. After having gone through the preparatory course of study at the academy in his native town, he entered at Dartmouth College in 1788 at the age of 16.

At the district school and academy, young Appleton gave evidence of vigorous intellect; and his amiable disposition combined with a native delicacy of feeling, conciliated the high regard both of his instructors and companions. Says one,* who

* Prof. Adams of Dartmouth College.

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was an intimate friend from his early childhood, "I have rarely, if ever, known a youth so universally esteemed and beloved. His agreeable manners and correct deportment were sure to gain the favor of old and young wherever he was known."

In college, as the writer is informed by the gentleman just referred to, he sustained a high reputation as a scholar. Deficient in no department of the collegiate course, his preference was for those studies which address the taste. As a classical scholar and a writer, he was regarded as inferior to no one in his class. It appears, that at this early period he laid the foundation of those mental habits, especially of that scrupulous regard to method in study, for which he was remarkable through life. He passed moreover through the temptations of a college life without censure or reproach, always exhibiting that delicate sense of propriety and keen moral perception, which were characteristic of his mature years.

After he left college, he was employed for nearly two years, as an instructor of youth at Dover and Amherst, N. H. In this occupation he was highly successful. He indulged much, at this period, his love of social enjoyments. His discriminating mind and general loveliness of character, his humor pure and delicate, and always at command, his social qualities and engaging manners, made him an ornament of the social circle.

He pursued a course of theological study under the direction of the venerable and eminent Dr. Lathrop of West Springfield, Mass. His papers of this period, comprising dissertations on various topics in theology, afford evidence that he was a diligent and successful student. They exhibit the mental traits for which he was afterwards distinguished, careful thought, a disposition to form well defined views, and logical precision. Few pupils in theology have won the confidence and affection of an instructor to so high a degree as did Mr. Appleton; and few, it may with truth be said, returned that interest with such unmingled respect and love. The Doctor did not conceal the high hopes he cherished of the future usefulness and eminence of his pupil; and Mr. Appleton, on his part, until the death of his

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venerated preceptor, maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with him, consulting him freely on the many perplexing subjects relating both to doctrine and the pastoral relation, which present themselves in the studies and labors of an active minister.

Mr. Appleton began to preach in the summer of 1795, and such was the opinion then entertained of his talents and piety, that some clergymen in Massachusetts, who did not consider him as according fully in sentiment with themselves, strongly recommended him to certain vacant parishes, as a candidate for settlement. During the two years that he was a candidate, he preached in several towns both in Massachusetts and New Hampshire; but most in Leicester, Mass. and Hampton, N. H.; from each of which places he received a pressing invitation to settle in the ministry of the gospel. In deciding the question which was thus submitted to him, he manifested a regard for the will of Providence, which was characteristic of him through life. The situation at Leicester, on many accounts, presented more attractions; but discovering, as he thought, indications that Providence had directed his steps to Hampton, he without hesitation decided in favor of that place, and was ordained in February, 1797.

Introduced into a new and important station, he entered upon the discharge of its duties with a deep sense of his responsibilities. He became at once a close, uniform and systematic student. He had indeed already laid the foundation of those admirable habits of study which he preserved through life. In the distribution of his time he was strictly methodical; and nothing but unavoidable avocations was allowed to intrude upon the plan which he had formed. "There was an order, a regularity in his various pursuits, that beautifully corresponded with the structure of his mind and the symmetry of his character." Theology was, no less from inclination than a sense of duty, the principal object of pursuit; and he left abundant evidence, not only in the reputation which he acquired while in the ministry, but in his discourses, his communications to the religious

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periodicals of the time and his private papers, that, unwilling to confine himself within the common range of the profession, he from the first sought to explore the whole field of theological learning, not from motives of ambition, but rather from an ardent love of truth and a deep sense of his accountability for the use he made of the powers which had been given him, and of his means of improvement and usefulness. By the time he left Hampton he was a theologian accomplished beyond his years.

It is no disparagement of Mr. Appleton to say, that when he entered upon the ministry, on some topics of theology he had not formed settled opinions; nor did he profess to have done it. Wedded to no system, calling no man master, he kept his mind open to conviction, and then, as indeed through life, was engaged in the earnest, unceasing pursuit of truth. He was always distinguished for independence of mind. Although he treated with great deference the opinions of those who were deserving of respect, he never resigned his right of judging for himself. It has been remarked of him by one who knew him well, that "for authorities without proofs he had but little reverence;" and by another of his personal friends, "that he thought for himself, and sought after truth with the most careful, laborious research; always accompanied, as there is good reason to believe, with fervent prayer for divine illumination."

The leading characteristics of his preaching, so far as relates to the subjects which he most frequently brought before his people, may be learned from the following extract from a discourse delivered February 22, 1807, the day which completed the tenth year of his ministry. "In reviewing the ten years of my ministry, if any cause of self-congratulation is presented, there are abundant causes of self-reproach. I have, indeed, from the beginning, preached what I believed to be the leading truths of the Bible; and if I have, of late years, insisted more than formerly, on some of its peculiar doctrines, it is because the importance of those doctrines has risen in my apprehension. I have preached, that moral depravity is universally prevalent in our world; of which depravity man and not God is the efficient

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cause;—that in consequence of human rebellion, God would have been just in consigning the whole human race to everlasting destruction; but he has, through the infinite benignity of his nature, sent his own blessed son to make atonement for sin, destroy the works of the devil, and to offer, on the most reasonable terms, pardon and life eternal to the apostate sons of Adam;—but that so deep rooted are human perverseness and love of evil, no one of our race would turn from sin to God, and be transferred from a state of death and ruin to a condition of grace and safety, without the powerful operation of grace on the heart:—that regeneration, or a change of heart and character is absolutely necessary to admission into the kingdom of God;—that although the unrenewed sinner does nothing which lays God under the smallest obligations to show him mercy, there is still a greater probability that regenerating grace will be conferred on such as make a serious use of prescribed means, than on such, as boldly insult the majesty of heaven, and despise the appointment of God;—that the divine life in the heart of every believer is maintained by the same divine power, by which it was implanted;—that no habitual transgressor can have any just ground to believe himself a child of God;—that the day is coming, when every man will be treated according as his works have been, but that works, in order to their being rewardable at the great day, must proceed from right disposition, love to God and submission to his will."

Some of the more abstruse and perplexing topics of our faith he does not appear to have discussed in his sermons. This is in part, doubtless, to be ascribed to his habitual caution in the expression of opinions, which were not the result of long, patient and profound reflection and investigation. It should also be borne in mind, that the history of religion shows us, that the changing aspects of the religious world, have led at different periods to corresponding differences in the matter as well as the manner of pulpit discussion; so that some subjects which now agitate the public mind, thirty years since were not called in question, or were not deemed essential to Christian edification. The

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views, however, which Dr. Appleton at length entertained on the most prominent doctrines of the Gospel, may be learned from his works now presented to the public.

As a preacher, though highly attractive, he was entirely free from all display of learning or study of effect. His manner, as a public speaker, will more properly occur to our notice hereafter. It is sufficient to remark here, that it was chaste, dignified, earnest, and in a high degree impressive. Most of his sermons were written while he was at Hampton. Though designed for the people of a secluded parish, they were prepared and composed with uncommon care and accuracy. He made it a rule to write but one sermon a week. Monday being devoted to pastoral visits he was accustomed to begin his sermon on Tuesday and end it on Friday. While his discourses were characterized by that simplicity which adapted them to the circumstances and wants of his people, they were also distinguished by richness of sentiment, by strength and purity of style. Whenever he preached, his presence in the pulpit was welcomed equally by the humble Christian and by men of intellect and cultivated taste.

Nor was his care in preparing himself for his public duties confined to the composition of his sermons. He meditated his prayers. Upon this department of ministerial duty he bestowed great attention, and appears to have diligently stored his mind with a great variety of materials adapted to all the occasions of pastoral duty. Those, who heard him conduct this part of religious service, were impressed with the profound reverence, the elevation, fervor and copiousness, which characterized his devotional exercises.

Besides the composition of his sermons he also contributed to some of the religious periodicals of the time. He was instrumental in establishing a periodical work entitled the Piscataqua Evangelical Magazine, which was conducted by a number of clergymen associated for the purpose. He was also an able contributor to the Panoplist, chiefly on points of doctrine. His communications are marked by the utmost fairness, by a sincere

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desire to ascertain truth, and by acumen, sound logic and skill in argument, in which he was not surpassed by any other contributor of his standing. His favorite signatures were Leighton and Owen.

His studies, however, were not exclusively professional. He gratified his taste for literature. History and polite learning received a due share of his attention. Classical studies he never suffered himself to neglect. Even under the pressure of parochial cares he always devoted a portion of his time to the ancient languages. The estimation in which he held this department of learning, as a source of mental discipline, and of correct taste, and especially in their connexion with the just interpretation of the sacred scriptures, was always apparent.

His love of learning and his habits of close and systematic application never intruded on the claims of parochial duty. In no particular are a religious society apt to be more unreasonable, than in their expectations of personal visits from their minister. It is believed, that Mr. Appleton was never charged with neglect in this respect. He visited his parishioners often, and as a minister. Frequently when visiting them, or when receiving visits from them, he spent a portion of the time in reading some such work as Doddridge's Rise and Progress, which was thus made the basis of instructive conversation on some topic of experimental religion.

A private manuscript, entitled Sabbath Evening Resolutions, contains the thoughts of his heart in respect to ministerial duty, and shows with what weight his responsibilities, as a minister of the gospel, rested upon him. This journal was commenced in 1799. The last entry bears date, Jan. 3, 1819. Frequent use will be made of this record of his heart, and it will be found to bear most delightful testimony to his character for circumspection, conscientiousness, and pure and elevated religious sentiment. The following extracts will be read with interest.

"*Sabbath, May* 12, 1799. — 1. Resolved never to distrust the goodness of God, nor have my spirits depressed by any thing unfavorable in worldly circumstances.

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2. Resolved to preach my sentiments, pray earnestly, conduct prudently, be active in discharging ministerial duties, and then let come of it what will.

As to the duties of this week, — 1. Seek opportunities of introducing religion in my occasional visits.

2. Seek opportunities of conversing with them that pray not in their families."

Particular individuals are then specified with whom he designed to converse during the week on the duties and claims of religion. He not unfrequently, in this way, considered on the evening of the sabbath, what there was in the situation of his flock requiring his pastoral care during the ensuing week. It may be added, that his peculiar delicacy of character and his tender regard for the feelings of others, never prevented him from administering warning and reproof when duty required.— Again,

"*Sabbath, May* 26. — Resolved to be peculiarly watchful against hasty, imprudent, or unreasonable expressions."

"*Sabbath evening, June* 9. — Being about to commence a journey, I resolve, by the aids of God's grace,

1. To employ many of my thoughts on profitable subjects by the way.

2. To guard against all unbecoming levity in company of my friends, among whom there is peculiar temptation to relax too far. To behave like a gentleman, but especially like a Christian minister.

3. To give conversation a serious turn, when it can be done with propriety."

His sense of dependence on God, his self-denying temper, and his ardent desire for the religious welfare of the people of his charge, will appear from the following passages.

"*January* 1, 1804. — It does appear to me, that religion is, somewhat more than usually, a subject of serious consideration among certain of my people. I thankfully acknowledge God's hand in this; and to the same hand I look to render any serious impressions lasting, and to induce a saving issue. I pray that

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he would afford me more light, knowledge and judgment in religious things; that he would give to me clearer views of religion and of my own state, that I may better divide the word of God, and give to every one his portion in season; that he would enable me to preach his word so clearly and forcibly, that none shall have any just excuse for leaving my ministry; that he would be pleased to confer on me, ignorant, feeble, unskilful and sinful as I am, the unspeakable honor of being instrumental in the salvation of souls; that he would dispose and enable me to rejoice, if the honor and influence of the gospel is promoted, however I myself should be neglected or depressed. As to my own spiritual concerns," he adds, "I am a poor miserable sinner, lying at God's mercy; in the disposal of whom, I know he will do well."

January 5, 1806 — He thus writes: "Through the wonderful and tender mercy of God, I am brought to see the commencement of another year. — My people are in peace, and so far as I can judge, remain friendly to me. But oh, that I could see some fruit of my ministry! Oh, that a blessing evidently attended it! I hope I sincerely desire a revival of pure and undefiled religion. Is it, O my God, too great an honor to put on a creature so ignorant, poor, and sinful as I am, to employ him as an instrument in such a work? Blessed God, thou canst work by feeble means, by instruments in themselves the most worthless. Such am I. Magnify thine own power in my weakness. As to my own spiritual state, I am less than the least of all saints, if I am indeed of that character."

Precious is the testimony, which we are thus enabled to draw from the sacred record of his secret aspirations and his unrevealed purposes, to his unceasing fidelity to his master, his care of his flock, and his constant watch over the outer and inner man. How does the trembling solicitude and the unfeigned humility of such a man, rebuke the shallow pretensions, and the vain assurance of too many who intrude themselves into the sacred office!

It is not alone in this record, designed for no eye but his own,

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that we discover evidences of his faithful ministry. None that knew him ever doubted that he felt deeply the importance of the trust, and assiduously and ably performed its duties. "Whether he ministered in the sanctuary, or taught from house to house, or dispensed instruction to children, a service in which he peculiarly delighted, or conversed and prayed with the sick and afflicted, all were convinced that he loved them, and earnestly desired their temporal and eternal welfare. They were not wanting in affection to him. Of this they gave abundant proof, while he dwelt among them; and after his removal, when he visited the place, they gathered around him, like children around a father. His coming occasioned universal joy, and they wept at every new parting. It has been said, that some of them were scarcely able to speak of him without tears."

Says one, who passed through the town several years after Mr. Appleton had left his people, and who spent an hour with a family who had enjoyed his ministry, "I can hardly tell you how full and ardent were their expressions of veneration and esteem for him. Notwithstanding the number of years which had elapsed since his removal, their recollections of his worth had all the vividness and freshness of the first bereavement."

Allusion has been made to the interest with which he regarded the children of his parish. He had with them a quarterly exercise for catechetical instruction, which was closed with a familiar extemporaneous address. Often, on his return from this labor, he expressed the great satisfaction he had experienced in it. He prepared a series of sermons on Watts's catechism, which formed the basis of these instructions. These discourses were delivered on Sabbath afternoons, and were listened to with no less interest by the parents, than by the youth for whom they were particularly designed.

Many of far less ability, and who apparently have fallen short of him in faithfulness and assiduity, have been favored with more marked success in their ministry. The true results of pastoral labor are indeed known only to him who knows all

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hearts; and not unfrequently one is permitted to cast the seed, the fruit of which is to be reaped by other hands. The religious state of his people was, doubtless, seriously affected by an incident in their history, which deserves mention, inasmuch as it caused agitation during the greater part of his residence among them, and was to him a source of deep solicitude, as well as a severe trial of Christian character.

Not long before his settlement, an unhappy division arose in the town which resulted in the formation of a new religious society, over which a minister had been settled. It was hoped that a union might be effected; but all conciliatory efforts proved unavailing, and the matter at length resulted in a vexatious and long contested suit at law. During this period of animosity and contention, nothing could exceed the prudence and Christian meekness manifested by Mr. Appleton. He was deeply interested in the circumstances of his beloved people, but his noble spirit, purified by the influence of religion, did not suffer contamination from the bitter strife that raged around him. Even those who were of the opposite party could not but regard him with entire respect, and as for his own church and people, their trial and conflict bound them more closely to their pastor. His feelings in view of this unhappy controversy are recorded in his private journal. They indicate a soul deeply moved, yet calm and submissive, and willing to commit the event to God's disposal. On this subject the following was found among his private papers, bearing date, August 22, 1799.

"In four weeks from this time, the cause which involves the interests of the society of which I am minister, will undergo another trial. I know the uncertainty of every event which depends on human decision; especially on a jury which may be ignorant, prejudiced or corrupted. Should we eventually lose all part in the property or even in the parsonage, it will, in all probability, put a period to our existence, as a religious society. Whatever may be the issue of our present litigation, I rejoice from my soul that the Lord reigneth.

"I love this people, and would sooner spend my days among

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them, than among any other people whatever. But I know, that God has greater regard for them than it is possible for me to entertain; and if his regard do not prevent him from rendering it necessary for me to leave them, my regard should not prevent me from obeying his providence. I earnestly pray God to defend the temporal and promote the spiritual interest of this people; and I do now solemnly resign myself and them to his wise providence; and shouldest thou, in thy wisdom, O God, render a separation necessary, wilt thou enable me, weak and imperfect as I am, to conduct in such a manner, as to do honor to thyself and to the holy religion of thy Son, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

The result of the suit was in favor of Mr. Appleton's society; and it is gratifying to know, that soon after he removed from Hampton, this breach was closed. The two societies were united and still continue so; and whenever he visited the place, he received scarcely less indubitable marks of respect from those who were of the seceding party, than from his own people.

The talents and acquirements of Mr. Appleton, combined with his well known prudence and purity of character, gained for him the highest respect of all the churches and congregations in that part of the country. By his brethren in the ministry he was much beloved. Says one of them, "in an association of about twenty ministers, and some of them considerably eminent, among whom were Doctors McClintock, and Buckminster, no one was held in higher estimation for talents, theological knowledge, or pastoral fidelity." He was ever active in efforts to promote ministerial faithfulness and improvement. At his suggestion several clergymen in the vicinity were accustomed to meet quarterly at each other's houses, for the purposes of private fasting and prayer, and of free conversation upon theological topics and official duties. After he left the ministry at Hampton he received many testimonials of the respect, confidence and affection cherished for him by his former associates, as honorable to his character as they must have been grateful to his feelings.

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Constituted as our Congregational Churches are, the influence of the minister is peculiarly important in respect to the external relation of the churches to each other. In questions of difficulty which often arise involving their peace, order and welfare, men of counsel and wisdom, and of a meek and quiet spirit, are extremely valuable. Many who attract much public notice, as able, impressive preachers, fail in this part of their duty. The well known qualities of Mr. Appleton, his enlightened judgment, his candor, independence, and sincerity, caused him to be in much request in Ecclesiastical Councils. It has been remarked by one, who was with him on several occasions of the kind, at times too when the subjects under deliberation were unusually difficult, that his discernment, discretion and decision were always conspicuous.

In the year 1800 he was married to Miss Elizabeth Means, daughter of Hon. Robert Means of Amherst N. H. In her he found a friend worthy of the connexion, which for nearly twenty years so happily subsisted between them. They had six children, three sons and three daughters. The youngest child, a son, was very suddenly taken from them, when three years old, in October 1817. The eldest son, after having graduated at Bowdoin College, while pursuing the study of law under the direction of Stephen Fales Esq. of Cincinnati, Ohio, was arrested by an attack of bilious fever, and died in October 1830. Thus were many cheering promises and the fond hopes of a large circle of friends suddenly withered. The other children are still living.

While he was settled in the ministry at Hampton, Mr. Appleton, as ever after, manifested great interest in the cause of education. He was a trustee of the flourishing and highly important institution, Phillips Academy at Exeter, and in that office was active and much relied on. He was especially interested in the subject of theological education. His standard was high, and he insisted strongly on the necessity, not only of religious character in the candidate for the ministry, but also of literary and theological attainments; and exerted his influence to awaken

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and strengthen similar sentiments in the minds of others. He himself while at Hampton, directed the studies of several who were pursuing a course of theology, and never failed of securing the highest respect and affection of his pupils.

Merit, like that of Mr. Appleton, could not long have been confined to the contracted sphere of usefulness in which it had risen into notice. In 1803 he was one of the most prominent candidates for the chair of Theology in the University at Cambridge. That so young a man, at a time too when great interest was felt in the result of the election, should have been selected for so responsible a station in the leading institution of the country, is a proof of the high estimation in which he was held.

In 1807, on the decease of Rev. Dr. McKeen, the first President of Bowdoin College, Mr. Appleton was chosen his successor. An honor involving responsibilities of such weight, was received with unfeigned humility. After much anxious deliberation he accepted the appointment. He was inaugurated in December of this year, and entered immediately upon the discharge of his official duties.

In consequence of the controversial spirit of the times, and the mutual jealousy which exists between those of different theological views, some have thought, that much of distrust in the minds of the community would be spared, if clergymen were not placed at the head of our colleges. The wisdom of this opinion may well be doubted, and there is reason to think, that if any thing should be gained in one respect by adopting such a course, more would be lost in another. No one of reflection, it is to be presumed, would advocate the notion of committing the charge of a seminary of learning to an individual who possesses no religious faith. We would not have our colleges become schools of theology, but no parent, much less a Christian parent,—no enlightened patriot, can consent, that our schools of learning shall ever be wanting in that moral and religious influence which alone can make them schools of virtue.

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It being then an established principle, that a strong moral and religious influence should preside in our collegiate institutions, it is not difficult to show, that to insure the proper amount of such an influence, the dignity and authority of the clerical character are essential. It may further be remarked, and it should be always borne in mind, as a circumstance of great weight in the question, that to manage youth, who, at a most critical period of their lives, are placed beyond the reach of immediate parental inspection and restraint, and who being, at least in a considerable degree, their own advisers and masters, are apt to be governed more by an erroneous "*esprit du corps*," than by the laws of sound morals, or even of good society, involves most delicate and perplexing responsibilities. Not to enumerate the various qualities which may and doubtless do often exist in a layman, as well as in him who wears the robes of the sacred office, a moral influence, constant and all pervading, by which is meant an influence brought to bear upon the highest principles of our being, and which, so far as it is successful, shall supersede the necessity of resort to the power of coercion; in fine, the power of high religious motives, is requisite to the successful administration of collegiate discipline. Without this moral power of which I speak, superior talents and profound learning are inadequate to the demands of the station occupied by the presiding officer in our higher institutions of learning. Now who is so well fitted to exercise such an influence, as he who has made it the study of his life to move the hearts and to touch the springs of action in his fellow men? — whose profession it has been to inculcate principles, which will subdue evil passions and strengthen the power of virtue? The life and duties of a pastor, moreover, besides that they impart the most valuable experience and a profound knowledge of the human heart, educate, if the expression may be allowed, in his breast a habit of feeling for others; in other words, a power of sympathy, of inestimable value to a college officer. To the President of a college his pupils constitute a society, in many respects resembling, in the

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relations which it involves, a parish, and requiring from him much of that solicitude and attention which none but a devoted pastor knows, or is wont to bestow.

President Appleton, when he entered upon his new sphere of action, exchanged a life of comparative quiet, for one of unceasing solicitude and oftentimes of embarrassment and perplexity. His unsparing fidelity made it a life of exhausting labor. At the outset he was called to encounter peculiar trials. Not to mention the relaxation of discipline likely to ensue on account of the protracted illness of the former President, and the long interval between the suspension of his labors and the coming of a successor, it was at a time, when there was throughout the country a tendency to looseness of sentiment and character. At no period in the history of our colleges was there perhaps more recklessness on the part of youth to contend with. The habits of society, which then made the use of intoxicating drinks an essential even of common hospitality, exerted a most deleterious influence on all our literary institutions. In respect to many who have received the benefits of a public education and have since fallen victims of the destroyer, their moral deterioration has been traced to the temptations of this period.

Besides the difficulties just mentioned, which were experienced, to a greater or less degree, at all our colleges, the institution to which President Appleton was invited, was in its infancy, situated in a remote part of New England, as yet a mere appendage of an older state. The value of liberal education was not generally appreciated, its advantages being at that period confined, to a great extent, to the sons of the wealthy. The funds of the college, moreover, were small and in an embarrassed state. The patronage which had been liberally bestowed on older institutions, particularly on the University, the foster-child of the state, had not, with a single exception, — that indeed an honorable one, — been enjoyed by this seminary in its infant struggles for existence. Frequent applications made to the legislature for pecuniary aid were fruitless, or were an-

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swered by donations in lands in the wilderness of Maine, then valuable only in distant prospect, — a prospect which the college was never permitted to realize, to the extent experienced by those, who have made trial of these El Dorados of later days. The number of officers, moreover, was small, and, as there seemed to be no probability of the condition of the institution being essentially changed in this respect, the President had before him the prospect of a life of unceasing toil.

He however undertook the responsibilities and labors of his office with alacrity, and gave to them all his energies; with what success, let the respect, gratitude, and affection of his pupils, and the united testimony of the friends of the college, and of the community at large bear witness. The sources of his success will appear, as we proceed in our portrait of his life and character as President.

The inaugural address of President Appleton clearly and forcibly expresses admirable views of collegiate discipline. No where has the writer seen the idea, that a strict and uniform administration of law is not only most salutary, but also most fair and honorable, exhibited with more conclusiveness than in the following passage: "On entering college, a student does, in fact, form a contract with the governors of the institution. They promise to instruct and guard him with parental care; he, on his part, stipulates obedience to the laws, docility, application, and correct habits. When every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward, there is no cause of complaint; nothing takes place, but what, at the time of entering into the agreement, it was understood should take place. The offender receives the punishment specified by those regulations to which he consented, and under which he placed himself. When determined to commit a crime, he does it in the distinct view of its consequences. Not so, should facts render it uncertain, whether strict obedience will be uniformly required. In this case, there would be a language in the administration, indefinite, to be sure, but certainly different from that of the written code; and he, who was disposed to

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transgress, would consider it problematical, whether, in case of detection, he should suffer, or be acquitted, — whether he should be judged by the law, or by some unknown modification of it. It appears, then, not only that the steady enforcement of established laws is necessary to preserve subordination, and secure authority from contempt, but that it is likewise most fair and honorable, as it respects the party stipulating obedience."

The following views are contained in the same address, on the subject of the moral and religious influence, which should be exerted by collegiate instructors. "I well know, it is not within human power to change the heart. Instructors can, by no efforts, communicate to their pupils a conformity to the divine image. But surely there are restraints, which may be imposed, there are means which may be used, and which are, in a greater or smaller degree, accompanied with success; and I tremble under the solemn conviction of the high accountability of that office on which I am entering; — a conviction, that the usefulness of the students in time, and their character through eternity may be affected, greatly affected by the manner, in which the executive officers of college discharge their duty."

Those who are acquainted with the leading features of his Presidency, well know that his practice was never at variance with his theoretical views. His whole intercourse with the students, his public services in the chapel, and, especially, his baccalaureate addresses, all embodied the spirit of the sentiments expressed in these extracts.

In truth President Appleton was admirably qualified for the office of presiding over a literary institution. He brought to the discharge of his duties, a conscientiousness, which forbade him to relax any effort, and a deep sense of responsibility both for the literary reputation, and the moral and religious welfare of those under his care. He also possessed great discretion, unshrinking integrity and firmness, an uncommon spirit of command, true love of learning, cultivated taste, and a delicacy and refinement of character which could not be surpassed.

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Such a man could not but gain the respect and affection both of the students, and of his associates in the government.

In consequence of the contracted means of the institution, to which allusion has been made, Dr. Appleton was obliged to take a more active part, than is common for the presiding officer, in the duties of instruction. There being no professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, or of Rhetoric and Oratory, the responsibility of these departments devolved, for the most part, upon him, and during the most of his official career he conducted the exercises of the students in both of them. Instruction in Butler's Analogy, and Paley's Evidences was always his peculiar province. With how much patience, assiduity and ability were these multiplied duties performed! His decided predilection for those studies, which relate to the moral and intellectual nature of man, imparted to the recitations in those departments, as conducted by him, a high degree of interest and importance. The text books at that time in use, besides those above named, were Locke on the Human Understanding and Stewart's Elements of Intellectual Philosophy. He never permitted himself to enter the class room, without having thoroughly investigated the subject of the lesson. He usually conducted such investigations with pen in hand, and to insure precision and clearness on his part, he was accustomed to write his questions in the margin of his book. These were framed with much care and skill, so as to fix the attention more on the subject under discussion, than on the author. The students well knew, that ignorance or sloth could not escape the severe scrutiny, they were obliged to undergo. Close attention and a vigorous exercise of their powers could alone stand the test, and the attentive pupil never left the recitation room without new topics for reflection, suggested both by the searching nature of the examination through which he had passed, and by the remarks of the President. The recitation in Butler's Analogy, in particular, can never be forgotten by the pupils of President Appleton. The most severe exercise in the whole range of the collegiate course, it was nevertheless always an-

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ticipated with deep interest, as one which would open new fields of thought, of great importance to the developement of mental and moral character. This anticipation was cherished, not only on account of the inestimable value of the text book, but also on account of the well known interest, and the profound understanding of the great topics brought into discussion, always exhibited by the instructor. All, doubtless, who have pursued the study of Butler's Analogy under the guidance of a faithful, able, and experienced teacher, are conscious, that they owe a debt of gratitude to that matchless intellect for having devised so precious a legacy. The pupils of President Appleton have peculiar cause for the exercise of such gratitude; for it may be said with truth, that his patient assiduity and skill gave to the greater portion of his classes a clear apprehension of the profound reasonings of this work, as well as a familiarity with them, far beyond what would generally be supposed. The writer can easily recall to mind the fact, that new subjects of conversation, and a new style of reasoning became at once apparent in the senior class, as soon as they were introduced to this author.

Although the bias of the President's mind gave him peculiar interest in the department of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, nevertheless, in whatever exercises of the students he superintended, he manifested zeal and energy. He was fond of classical studies, and read the best authors, both Latin and Greek, with accuracy and taste. He took a deep interest in this department of the college course, and excelled as an instructor in it. At different times he heard the recitations in most of the Latin and Greek authors at that period read in our colleges, and his manner of conducting these exercises was marked by the peculiarities, which have been already noted. The passage always underwent a thorough examination, and minute accuracy in the forms and syntax was required, as also in the prosody, a point then too commonly neglected. The partiality of the President for Livy was proverbial among the students, who, with the freedom characteristic of college youth, were wont to say, that were an edict published, requiring all other books to be

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destroyed, next after the Bible, with Butler in one pocket, and Livy in another, he would be content.

As has been intimated, the correction of the exercises in composition, both themes and forensics, devolved upon the President. The influence of his own severe taste, and uncommon precision and accuracy in the use of language, was manifest in the literary performances of his pupils. Pretension and conceit, whether in thought or expression, met with no indulgence from him. Yet his criticism, though rigid, was ever gentle and courteous. The subjects assigned for forensic disputation, were usually derived from the studies of the class in intellectual, moral or political philosophy. This exercise was open to all the students of college. The decisions of the President, which were uniformly written, contained a brief summary of the most important arguments on both sides, followed by his own opinion. They were marked by that logical exactness and clear conclusive argumentation, for which he was distinguished, and were listened to with great attention. As the topics thus discussed were some of the most interesting questions which arise in these departments, and those on which he had bestowed much reflection, this exercise was of great value to the student. It served to settle in his mind correct opinions and just sentiments on important topics, while, at the same time, the severe logic, which presided, formed him to habits of sound and accurate reasoning.

If the student ever felt any want of interest in the exercises conducted by the President, it was altogether his own fault. The President's manner uniformly showed that he himself attached importance to the recitation. No languor, no indifference, no disposition to hurry through a task, was ever apparent in him. The natural tendency of this was to impress the student with the idea, that the exercises, at which he presided, were not to be lightly esteemed, much less to be neglected. His remarkable punctuality served to deepen this impression. It was well understood, that nothing but urgent necessity prevented him from being in his place at the appointed time. The

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importance of these traits in the character of a college officer, particularly of him who is at the head of the institution, can best be appreciated by those, who know something of the delicate responsibilities which attach to the station.

An instructor, however, may be true to his hour, as the shadow to the dial, and be zealous in his vocation, and yet fail of securing that respect and confidence, which are essential to his success. These feelings on the part of the students President Appleton always commanded. To say nothing, more particularly in this place, of his uncommon dignity of manner, the impression made upon the minds of his pupils in regard to his own superior powers of intellect, his thorough scholarship and pure taste, was deep and universal, and this, from no parade of learning or affectation of unusual depth of understanding ever witnessed in him. Nor did any pretend to call in question his great solicitude for their advancement in useful knowledge. It was easily credited, that his interest in their literary exercises was yet more intense than their own. His manner in the recitation room, though in the highest degree dignified, was also kind and conciliating. It commanded the tribute of the utmost respect; it also, to the same degree, begat confidence.

With such qualifications, his influence as an instructor, as may reasonably be supposed, was of inestimable value. In him, an admirable model of exact, patient, and vigorous thinking, combined with fine taste and ardent love of liberal learning, was constantly exhibited before his pupils for their imitation. Nor was his influence that of example merely. He was assiduous in his efforts to form them to intellectual habits like his own, and these efforts were not in vain. He was eminently successful, it is believed, in impressing upon their minds the peculiar characteristics of his own. Says one, who had a good opportunity of observing the fact to which he alludes, "that the peculiar character of his intellect was not unfelt in the Seminary, is evidenced, in no slight degree, by the comments, which gentlemen of intelligence have so often made upon the literary performances of those, who were educated under his care.

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Sobriety, good sense, and manly expression have generally distinguished these exhibitions to an extent, it may sometimes have been deemed, not only unusual, but premature; an opinion, doubtless just, had the more essential excellencies of composition, which have been mentioned, been cultivated to the neglect of his imagination."* It does not admit of question, that his influence had, in an uncommon degree, a tendency to give his pupils habits of logical exactness in reasoning, of patient, thorough investigation, as well as to form them to a pure taste. The entire absence, moreover, of display in himself, rebuked any disposition to be superficial in them. There is indeed little risk in affirming, that a large proportion of those who enjoyed the privilege of being trained by him, are still conscious, in their mental operations, of his forming hand.

To the traits of character, as a president, already mentioned, Dr. Appleton added the excellence of great uniformity and firmness in administering the discipline of the institution. So far as was practicable, he maintained a familiar acquaintance with the standing of every student; so that whenever there were appearances of deterioration in any one, the proper remedy might be promptly applied. His supervision of the operations of the whole system was universal and unremitting. He made it manifest, that he felt his own responsibility, as the head of the college, to be diffused, in a measure, through all the departments of instruction and government; and it was this constant vigilance and promptness of action, that gave to the discipline of the institution the high reputation it sustained during his presidential career. His system of discipline had nothing peculiar in its theory. It was that which then prevailed at similar institutions, but it was faithfully and energetically pursued. When private expostulation had failed to effect reform, more public punishment and disgrace was the resort. His warnings and counsels, conveyed with parental solicitude and kindness, not unfrequently excited feelings of the liveliest gratitude, of which he subsequently received many testimonials.

* Sketch of his character, by Rev. Dr. Nichols of Portland.

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In administering reproof he was unrivalled. There was such a solemnity in his manner, and pungency in his rebukes, the guilt, baseness, and ill consequences of vicious conduct were so plainly and forcibly represented, that the delinquent must have been hardened indeed, if his mind were not overwhelmed with shame and remorse. The effect of his admonitions was often deep and permanent. If they were not effectual to reform, certain it is, they were never forgotten.

Whenever there was reason to apprehend the existence of a general evil in college requiring special interposition for its suppression, such as a relaxation of studious habits, or the prevalence of any particular vice, the President made it the subject of a special address or lecture in the chapel. Such instances were rare, but when they did occur, he fully met the exigencies of the occasion. At one period there was reason to apprehend the rapid inroads of licentiousness. The President was alarmed, and felt, that immediate measures were demanded to check an evil so disastrous. He accordingly requested the students to pause after evening prayers, when he addressed them on the subject. His remarks were brief, but full of pungency and deep pathos; and being uttered with the dignity and force of manner for which he was remarkable, they were overpowering. He portrayed with a few bold touches the odious character and the deplorable consequences of the vice, to which they were exposed, and, with the solicitude of a father, urged an immediate abandonment of its seductive wiles. It was manifest, that he trembled for those who had fallen, and that there was cause for all to tremble, not only for them, but also for themselves. One who was present, remarked, that as his piercing, withering glance passed around the chapel, you might see this one and that one drop his head in confusion. The address was general, but conscience, aided by the uncommon power of the President's manner, gave it all the effect of a public, personal rebuke and appeal. This brief address will be remembered by those who heard it, as a fine specimen of eloquence.

President Appleton sympathized deeply with the parents of

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those who were committed to his charge, and particularly, when their sons, by their irregularities, brought upon themselves college censure, he was oppressed with a sense of the anguish, their conduct caused in the parental heart. It is believed, that instances were rare, in which he did not possess the confidence of those who had sons at the college, and many were the cases, in which his solicitude for the welfare of the son, and the delicacy and tenderness which he manifested towards the parent, excited emotions of sincere and lasting gratitude, even when severe punishment and mortification were deemed necessary. Those, however, who have had any experience of the trials of college officers, well know, that their best intentions are often misinterpreted, not only by their pupils, but also by parents and friends. President Appleton was not spared such trials. "When, however, his measures were misunderstood, and his fidelity was requited with resentment and reproach, he exhibited genuine magnanimity. He was never indeed unmindful, that the beings placed under his care were endued with reason, and he did not wish to govern them by mere authority and power. Whenever he rejected their petitions, he sought, at the same time, to convince them, that it would be wrong to do otherwise; to their complaints and remonstrances they always found him a willing listener; and if they could not prevail to alter his determinations, it was because he had proceeded with deliberation and sound judgment in forming them. He expected, from the first, to meet with difficulties. But, 'O my God,' his prayer was, 'enable me to act uprightly, prudently, uniformly, resolutely, and with love to thee; then let come of it what will, by thy grace, I will endure it all.'* The prayer was answered, and the resolution, connected with it, was accomplished."

Whenever circumstances required the adoption of severe measures in discipline, as has been already intimated, the President, having once deliberately resolved upon his course, pursued it with unshrinking firmness. Nothing but a strong con

* His Ms. journal.

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viction of duty could induce him to swerve or change. Rarely, indeed, did he find occasion to alter his determination. He always acted with exemplary caution. He weighed well before he decided. When the government met to deliberate on a perplexing case of discipline, he was accustomed to seek divine direction in prayer. Near the end of his life he declared, that he had never repented a decision in regard to college discipline, except in one instance, when he yielded to the wishes of his associates, and the event proved, that the opinion, which he had previously formed, was correct. What consolation it must have afforded him to be able thus to affirm, that he had ever maintained a good conscience in respect to duties, often so delicate and perplexing!

President Appleton, it should be remarked, was far from being constitutionally pertinacious and unyielding. If he was immovable, it was because he was conscientious. This firm adhesion to his purpose was always at a great expense of feeling on his part. He felt unfeigned solicitude for the pupil, he sympathized deeply with the parent. Those only who knew him best, were aware of that under-current of deep feeling, which he often concealed beneath a calm, unruffled surface, and which made his rigid adherence to duty more meritorious. The enforcement of college discipline would have cost few men the sleepless nights, and the exquisite suffering, it often occasioned him; and yet how firmly was it executed! Firmness is indeed virtue, when exercised by keenly sensitive minds like his.

His interest in the students was not confined to the common intercourse of officers and students. Many can recal to mind frequent acts of kindness, experienced both from him and his family. The sick were cheered by their active sympathy, and, in some instances, even where there was no peculiar claim, were taken to his house, and nursed with tender care. Such acts of kindness, always conferred in the most delicate manner, served to fix in the minds of the students the persuasion, that their President cherished towards them true parental solicitude and affection.

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His views in regard to the duty of college officers to bring the influence of religious principle to act upon the minds of their pupils, have been already noticed. No professorship of theology having been established in the institution, the religious instruction of the students devolved almost entirely upon him. He, from the first, conducted an exercise in the Scriptures on Sabbath evening in the chapel, in which all the students participated. Several volumes of his questions in manuscript, used on these occasions, interspersed with occasional remarks, and prepared with characteristic care, are yet preserved. It was his custom, moreover, to deliver a theological lecture in the chapel at two o'clock, Thursday afternoon. Most of these lectures were transcribed by himself or under his direction, a year or two before his death, into three bound volumes, which are now in the library of the college. They were manifestly composed with great care, and with peculiar reference to the wants of those to whom they were addressed. It is cause of regret, that, by his premature death he was prevented from adding to their number, and discussing several topics of interest, essential to a full course of theological instruction. The influence of these lectures, eternity alone will reveal. It must have been great. They were always listened to with attention, and made a deep impression. The understanding was generally convinced, and the conscience often aroused. Says one of his earlier pupils, "the impressive manner in which he delivered his lectures was often noticed. I remember an instance of its effect. A young man, after hearing a lecture, remarked to a fellow student with apparent solemnity, that he considered himself one step nearer perdition than when he entered the chapel, for he believed what they had just heard was true, and yet he was not benefitted by it."

In no particular, it may be affirmed, did he more completely fulfil the measure of his responsibility, than in his efforts to sustain high moral and religious principle among those under his care. He was emphatically a man of God among men.—

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No one could come within the sphere of his influence, without receiving the impression, that he felt himself, under all the circumstances of his life, to be an accountable being. This impression arose, not from any affectation of austerity or seriousness in his countenance or bearing; a strong sense of religious obligation was deeply fixed in his soul, and inwrought into his whole character. It threw an holy influence around him, and combined, as it was, with a most impressive exterior, it made it impossible, as has been remarked by others, for one to trifle in his presence. This high moral cast of his character will occur to our notice in another connexion. Besides that it gave great weight to his precepts and exhortations, as a religious teacher, it undoubtedly added essentially to his general influence, as an officer of college. His desires, however, extended beyond the existence of a general impression on the minds of the students in favor of virtue and religion. While he enforced the claims of religion to their serious attention, as rational and accountable beings,—and who ever did this with more convincing power than he! he constantly sought to urge its demands upon the conscience and the heart. In truth, such an influence was given to the truths, duties, and sanctions of religion, by his character, instructions and prayers, as to occasion the remark made by one of his pupils, "it is impossible to go through Bowdoin College without receiving serious impressions." When he had reason to believe, that a spirit hostile to religion prevailed in college, it occasioned him great anxiety and distress, and even cost him sleepless nights; while, on the contrary, evidence of a change in this respect, especially when there was a revival of religion among the students, awakened in his heart emotions of sincere joy and gratitude.

His private journal shows how absorbing was his interest in the moral and religious welfare of the college. Under date of July 17, 1808, he says, "I had hopes, that my preaching might be the occasion of exciting some serious attention among the students. I have used some exertion with that design. Hitherto an infinitely wise and holy God has not seen fit to give any

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success. Every effort seems to have failed. But it is all right. O God, thou hast done well. Many whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose have met greater discouragements. I would not yet despond. I would yet hope in God. To human apprehension, what amazing good would result from a revival of religion at this college! It would be communicated to the people here, and, through the students, to places far distant. But surely God has a more comprehensive view of matters than I have, and my ignorance cannot direct his infinite wisdom. Lord, enable me to do my duty!"

Again, Oct. 10, 1813, he writes: "As to the college, the dealings of God have been mysterious. A year since Mr. Southgate was here, full of zeal and Christian excellence. He made great exertions for the salvation of the students. From these exertions I had much hope. But God has been pleased, in infinite wisdom, I doubt not, to remove him. He fell sweetly asleep in Jesus. C——, a pious student, where is he? sick, and I fear, will never return. O God, thy footsteps are not known. Righteous art thou, when I plead with thee, when I talk of thy judgments. We have recently admitted one pious student, and hope for another. O Lord, how much does he need divine support! I pray thee, O God, to give him ardent, but well regulated zeal! Give him prudence, cheerfulness and resolution. Lord, send us more of this character. Excite Christians to pray for us, and to use their influence for us. But what is their influence without thine?" *

* The reader may not be aware, that, at the period to which the above extract refers, the proportion of religious young men in our seminaries of learning was much less than it is now. He may then perceive one reason why so much importance was attached to the residence even of a single individual of this character. The student referred to by the President, was at one time the only member of college who had made public profession of religion. The following statement found in a historical sketch of Bowdoin college, published in the American Quarterly Register for Nov. 1835, may not be without interest, as it relates to the same period, and the same individual who are mentioned in the President's journal.

In 1810, an individual entered college, who, to highly respectable

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The President was at length permitted to witness the moral and religious improvement in the institution, which had been with him the object of strong desire and most fervent prayer. In 1816 a deep interest in religion was manifested among the students, and six or eight gave evidence of religious character. It was a new event in the history of the college, and excited the liveliest gratitude in the friends of religion. The emotion, which it awakened in the breast of the President, may be learned from his journal.

"*Nov.* 28, 1816, he writes, "As it respects college, in addition to common mercies, which still continue in abundance, God has been pleased, as I trust, to visit several of the students with his saving health. We do hope, that at least six of the number have been transformed by the renewing of the mind. A few others are serious, but we fear concerning them. The seriousness has been attended with silent, but deep anxiety, which has gradually given way to hope, a hope, feeble and intermitting, but slowly acquiring strength. This is a great thing, a very great thing. It is what we have been long praying and longing for. To be sure, we did, a few weeks since, hope that

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scholarship, added the charms of a piety, deep, fervent, yet unobtrusive. He was alone among his fellow-students; yet he sustained, in the midst of thoughtlessness and open immorality, an elevated Christian character, without reproach, to the end of his college course. — His memory is still cherished with respect and affection by his contemporaries in college. He could warn and exhort without exciting hostility to the truth or to himself. Through his instrumentality, if we mistake not, a Saturday evening conference was established among the students, which, conducted most commonly in the early period of its history by students, but recently by the instructors, still continues, and has doubtless done much to sustain a healthful moral and religious influence in the institution. In 1812, a tutor was appointed, Frederic Southgate, A. B., lovely in his character, as a Christian, a scholar, and a man. His fervent piety always shone with a mild radiance. Many can recall with satisfaction the affectionate counsel and earnest exhortation to a life of purity and devotion, which fell from his lips even in the recitation room. By a mysterious providence he was able to discharge the duties of his office but a part of the year. During the year commencing Sept. 1813, two or three students of decidedly religious character were admitted into college.

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more would be done. But blessed be God, that he has done so much. A third of the students, or very nearly that proportion, it is now hoped, are pious. It is but a little while since we had none of this description. When I review what I wrote Oct. 10, 1813, and compare the state of college then with what it is now, I am constrained to say, that the Lord hath done great things! Oh may those, who hope that Christ is formed in them, manifest, by the suavity of their temper, and the purity, and prudence, and holiness of their lives, the power and excellence of religion!"

Again, Dec. 4, 1817, he remarks: "As to the college, God has shewn us new favors. Not only have a considerable number of serious students entered, but there have recently been, as we hope, three or four individuals converted to the Lord. This is a great thing, an unexpected mercy, that God should have returned to us so soon. Those students, who were thought to have experienced religion last year, have, by divine grace, done well. They appear to be good, sound, judicious and zealous Christians. This is a glorious thing. Religion seems to have obtained strong footing in Bowdoin College. Christ seems to have owned us very distinctly and graciously. Oh that he might pay us frequent visits! Oh that his work of grace may be further carried on to his own praise! Oh that the college may always exhibit a sweet and graceful union of literature and piety. May God preserve those who have lately begun to hope in his mercy. May there always be a goodly seed. Towards us, already, the mercy of the Lord has been unutterable. Praise, everlasting praise be rendered to his name!"

His deep solicitude for the welfare of the students was never more apparent than on the annual commencements. On no occasion did he appear to so much advantage himself. His fine countenance, irradiated with a glow of excitement and a noble expression, his commanding figure, his grace and matchless dignity, combined to make his appearance in the ceremonies of the day peculiarly impressive. But admiration of him,

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who presided, was absorbed in the higher interest which he threw into the occasion, as one deeply interesting to the young men particularly concerned, to the institution which was about to dismiss them from her embrace, and to the cause of learning and virtue. To him it was always a day of great solicitude. Apart from his anxiety in respect to the bearing, which the exercises might have upon the reputation of the college, he made it evident by his prayers, and especially by the address, which he was accustomed to deliver to the graduating class at the close of the exercises before the ceremony of conferring degrees, that he sympathized with his pupils who were just about to leave his care, with minds excited by the circumstances of the occasion, and full of hope and joy. It was apparent, to use his own language on one of these occasions, that he "eagerly seized the few moments which remained of their college life, with design to produce or perpetuate moral impressions." With unfeigned earnestness of spirit he sent them forth with these his last instructions, with the hope and prayer, that by the blessing of heaven, these instructions might be of some avail to them amid the temptations of a world unfriendly to virtue. The reflecting could not help feeling, that a parent's blessing followed them, and that with theirs he united his own happiness and honor.

In truth, it is barely doing him justice to affirm, that the college in all its interests always, to use his own expression in his journal, *bore on his mind.* He had a quick sensibility to whatever affected its interests. His solicitude in its behalf never slumbered. Friends, his family, and personal convenience, were freely sacrificed, if occasion required, to the demands of collegiate duty. His motto was, "College first, family and friends next." In fine, he identified himself with the institution. He had much of the pride of the scholar, and was undoubtedly animated by a spirit of elevated ambition, but, and the remark is made with great confidence, as a just tribute to his rare and disinterested virtue, it was because he felt, that his station demanded of him high scholarship, and he wished to contribute, so far as might be, by his own efforts and his own personal rep-

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utation, to the elevation of the seminary, over which Providence had placed him.

To insure the highest success in the office held by President Appleton, the possession of personal dignity and true unaffected courtesy, is undoubtedly requisite. The young, it is well known, are much influenced by appearance; and although we may all rejoice, that the austerity and reserve of former days have passed away, yet, in the intercourse between instructors and their pupils, form and ceremony cannot be entirely rejected. He must possess great weight of character and means of influence altogether uncommon, who can dispense with them, and yet maintain that degree of respect, which is essential to his full success, as an instructor and governor. There is no doubt, that the President's personal appearance and manners did much for him, and although they have before been alluded to, it becomes me to give a more minute account of them.

He was a little less than six feet in height, and his whole figure, though not large, was commanding. The engraving of him, which was published soon after his decease, is far from doing him justice. The contour of his head was fine. His forehead was high and spacious; his head very bald and of a brilliant whiteness; his eyes, a deep blue, and his complexion remarkably fair. His countenance was impressive. No one could see him without being struck at once with its benignity, intelligence, and elevation. "It was frequently marked, to no ordinary degree, with the indications of thought and care. How far it was capable, at all times, and then particularly, of exhibiting any nobleness of expression, will be long preserved in the recollection of those who knew him." * Whenever he was under excitement, as in animated conversation, or on a public occasion, it was irradiated with a delightful glow. In his manners, the most strict courtesy and urbanity were combined with a rare dignity and gracefulness. I think it not unworthy

* Sketch, &c.

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of him to remark, that his personal habits were, in all respects, such as characterize the most refined society.

It is of great importance that those, who are training students, should exemplify in themselves the value of studious habits and thorough mental discipline. In this respect, the pupils of President Appleton, as has already been said, saw in him a model worthy of imitation. His example was eminently that of the scholar. His strict regard to system, while he was a minister at Hampton, has occurred to our notice; and to the continued observance of it he unquestionably owed much. Feeling sensibly the demands, which his office made upon him for mental effort and extensive attainments, immediately on entering upon its duties, he commenced a course of vigorous, unremitting application to study. He was uniformly in the habit of assigning to himself a certain amount of labor each day. If he was prevented from accomplishing his plan by company, or unexpected calls upon his time, and he was of course exposed to frequent interruptions, he was accustomed to sit up so much the later to atone, if possible, for the intrusion. Theology, being always regarded as his main object of pursuit, attention to that, as a general fact, constituted a part of every day's employment. But deeming it incumbent on him, as the head of a literary institution, to secure and maintain an acquaintance with all the branches of collegiate study, his literary pursuits were often various. Different portions of time, not occupied by official duties, were allotted to different studies. For example, a part of the day was devoted to theology, another part to the classics, another to historical, or other reading of importance. He was, moreover, in the habit of making particular departments the subject of leading inquiry for weeks and months together. He would, for example, for several weeks, devote such portions of his time, as were not occupied by his course of theological study, to philological pursuits, or to natural science, or to mental and moral philosophy. In this way he always, in a good degree, preserved a familiar acquaint-

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ance with the whole range of academic studies, and could estimate the improvement made by the students in the different departments. His system admitted only of that kind of reading, which had a bearing on his studies. If he indulged in lighter reading, it was during those fragments of time, which his strict economy enabled him to gather up, without encroaching on the hours of regular study. He read the leading periodicals of the day, in order to maintain a general acquaintance with the progress of the world. He loved learning, in the most liberal sense of the term, but never indulged a propensity, so common with ordinary minds, to attainments various and discursive. The principle conveyed in the precept *legere multum potius quam multa*, regulated his practice. What he read, he most commonly studied. He made much use of "common places," for the purpose of recording dates of important events, or of preserving facts, statements, and opinions, which might be of use to him in his studies; a practice, which he commenced while at college.

At one period near the close of his life, he, for a time, rose at four o'clock in the morning in the winter season, for the purpose of study, and, at the same time, used to remain at his studies until a late hour of the night. He also, for some time, used a very spare diet, in the hope, that he would require less interruption for the purpose of bodily exercise; but he soon found, that his physical system could not endure so severe demands upon its energies. His numerous friends, far and near, hearing of this severe application to study, became seriously alarmed, and importuned him to spare himself, from a consideration of what was due both to his family and the public. Says the late Rev. Dr. Buckminster, in a letter bearing date March, 1808; "Nor have I been much less anxious for you since I heard from pretty good authority, that you sit up at your studies till after 12 o'clock, and are up again at them even before the sun rises. To the hour of rising I have no objection, but I think it must be, sooner or later prejudicial to you to trim the midnight lamp. Nature will not suffer her laws and orders to be long insulted

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or disregarded with impunity, and whatever else you may call man, he is an animal that wants regular rest and exercise; and he wants them, when his fellow animals, (O shame! less perverse than he,) are sweetly enjoying them." Such warnings and entreaties, alas! he disregarded, and this from no unworthy motives of ordinary ambition. To the earnest remonstrances of his wife and family, who urged him to remit his diligence, he used to reply, "My duty to college requires it," or in words to that effect. He, if any one, knew the value of time. He never wasted it on things of little moment. He always kept some useful end in view. He never travelled without books to employ his leisure moments, when he stopped on the road. To some indeed it might appear, that he adhered too rigidly to his system of mental cultivation; for even in conversation, he was more fond of seizing upon some topic of importance, and pursuing it in a thorough discussion, than of desultory remark; so that the social circle was oftener to him the occasion of continued mental effort, than of relaxation from severer studies. In short, no one, who does not shut his ears entirely to the calls of public or social life, could be a more constant or successful student. He cultivated habits of application not only from love of learning, but from a sense of duty.* A similar regard to duty alone ever induced him to intermit his diligence. He even allowed himself but little time for his family, and few had stronger attractions in the domestic circle, or were more sensible to them.

Besides being himself a close and uniform student, to use the words of the author of the sketch, "the necessity of application as the first, second and third requisite to insure literary eminence, application not *per saltum*, but systematic and unremitted, he appeared deeply solicitous to inculcate. He was strongly impressed with the difference he conceived to exist, in

* In his Journal under date of December 1817, of three things for which he prays, the following is one. "That I may study with more industry and effort, but constantly look to God to sanctify my studies and give me success. May I read the scriptures, pray and meditate more. May I do all for thee, O my God and Saviour!"

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respect to habits of study, between the scholars of this country and those of Europe. He considered, that an unnecessary degree of timidity was entertained among ourselves, as to the injurious effects of laborious mental application upon the bodily health; and was persuaded, that the instances, in which they had appeared to result from this cause, had generally proceeded from inattention to exercise and regimen. 'It will be pardoned, perhaps,' he remarks, 'if I suggest a doubt, whether the highest degree of application, of which the mind is capable without endangering health, has ever been ascertained by experiment, even at our best public Seminaries.' That he ascertained and even exceeded it himself, however, there is but too much reason to suppose."

In addition to the perplexing cares and the multiplied labors of the Presidency, Dr. Appleton preached much, and discharged a great amount of pastoral duty for the Congregational Society in Brunswick, it not being in their power to secure to themselves the services of a settled minister, except for a small part of the time. Many among them still bear grateful testimony to the sympathy and tender regard for their welfare, both as a people and as individuals, which he ever manifested towards them. His station, moreover, and his extensive reputation subjected him to frequent public calls. His presence was sought in Ecclesiastical Councils, especially when difficult and perplexing questions were likely to arise: he was also widely consulted by leading divines in the New England Churches on the most important movements of that period in the religious community. "That his services were highly valued, was made sufficiently evident by the frequency, with which they were solicited. Within a few years, he was invited to preach, not only before the Bible, Missionary, Education and Peace Societies of Maine, and repeatedly at meetings of citizens, associated to suppress immoralities, and to promote the better observance of the Sabbath, but also before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, of which he was a

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member, before the Legislature of Mass. at the annual election, before the Convention of the Congregational Clergy of Mass., before the Mass. Society for the suppression of Intemperance, and had his health permitted, he would, in the year in which he died, have addressed the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.* He also preached several Ordination Sermons. His discourses delivered on most of these occasions were published, and many of them are contained in these volumes.

Besides these testimonials of the respect entertained for him by the public, he was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

But we are now drawing near to the close of his useful and honorable career. The effect of his excessive labors and his habits of unremitted application upon a system, which was not invigorated and refreshed by needful exercise, soon became too apparent. About the time of his losing a very dear child, October 1817, he took a severe cold, from the effects of which he never entirely recovered. No serious apprehensions, however, were entertained respecting him until early in 1819, when, greatly to the concern of his personal friends and the friends of the college, he gave too plain indications of the assaults of disease. His complaints were a slight cold, great hoarseness, and debility. His symptoms indicated a disease of the larynx, which advanced with fearful rapidity. He was unable to preside at the college exhibition in May. It was hoped, that a journey, which he took in the spring vacation, as far as Amherst N. H. would be beneficial, and he prolonged his visit to his friends beyond the opening of the term. The occurrence, before unknown, of his absence at the beginning of a term, deeply affected both himself and the members of the institution. His own feelings in view of the circumstance, and his affectionate

* The sermon designed for this occasion is the sixteenth in the selection, Vol. II.

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solicitude for their welfare, are manifested, in an affecting manner, in the following letter which he wrote to the students from Amherst.

AMHERST, JUNE 12, 1819.

My Dear Young Gentlemen,

It is impossible, that an occurrence so new, as my absence from college at the commencement of a term, should not be attended with unusual feelings, and those not always of the most pleasant nature. Anxious as I always am for your intellectual and moral improvement, you will easily perceive, that such solicitude cannot be diminished, either by reviewing the last term, or by the conscious inability, which I feel, of contributing any thing at present, either to the government or instruction of college.

There are two capacities, in which every member of a public institution ought to consider himself,—I mean that of a *student*, and that of an *accountable being*. Your opportunities for enlarging the mind, and increasing that intellectual distinction, which God has been pleased to make between human and brutal natures, are numerous and invaluable. By what you are conscious of in yourselves, and by what you observe in others, you perceive how differently these opportunities are improved, and to what different results they eventually lead. You perceive, that residence at college, is, as it respects this world,—as it respects character, *a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death;*—it renders more public your *bad* or your *good* conduct, thereby making your honor or disgrace more extensively known. You are not fully sensible, I am persuaded, how much not only the character of college, but your own individual characters are affected, in view of the public, either by indolence, dissipation, and impiety, or by the opposite virtues.

Reputation and happiness are, indeed, as it respects their nature, distinct; yet is the latter, in no small degree, dependent on the former. Permit me to ask, whether you have not found, either by experience or observation, that your happiness

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may be very essentially injured or advanced by your own conduct and deportment during the space even of a single term. Have you not observed, that a student may not only very essentially impair his *reputation* in view of his fellow students, and in view of the government, in a time so short as three months, but that he may make, during that time, fearful inroads upon his own *happiness*? Call to mind a single student, who has closed a college term with happy reflections, when conscious, that, by associating with the indolent, disreputable, and vicious, he has diminished his taste for study, lost his previous standing in his class, lost the friendship and confidence of the better part of his fellow students, and incurred the displeasure of government? Suppose, that, in addition to all this, he is conscious of new inclinations to vice, a taste for guilty pursuits, a love for drinking and noisy dissipation; suppose, that he feels these propensities to be increasing, his efforts to counteract them ineffectual, and himself becoming more and more the unresisting slave of a vice, which the experience of others has taught him not only entails everlasting death, but spares not the temporal comforts, the health, or even the life of its votaries.

But, my dear young gentlemen, let me urge you to regard yourselves more distinctly as accountable, immortal beings. How often do you witness facts of such a nature, as show the uncertainty of all human hopes! By a death, which occurred in your near vicinity during the vacation, you have been reminded how inevitable are the arrows of death; with how much certainty they reach the heart, when sent by the command of a Sovereign God! You see what seeming casualties may suddenly deprive you, first of reason, and then of life! Why, in order to sport with their salvation, will mortals disregard all the facts presented to their observation, no less than all the remonstrances, which, in Scripture, are addressed to their reason, their hopes, and their fears?

Let me entreat you, young gentlemen, to distinguish the present term by your industry and Christian virtue. Do yourselves no injury. Excite no distress and mortification in the

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breasts of your friends, and of those, who are most anxious for your present honor and everlasting welfare. Consider, that, as God has made you rational creatures, — as such he requires you to live, as such will he reward or punish you through the countless ages of the approaching life.

I hope to be at Brunswick in about ten days; but such is the state of my health, as to render every calculation of this kind extremely precarious: and my language ought to be: It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.

With great affection, I am,
Young Gentlemen, yours, &c.
J. APPLETON.

He soon after returned to Brunswick, his health not essentially improved. During the summer and the first part of autumn, hopes of his restoration were at times indulged, to be soon again blasted. On the 12th of October a profuse hemorrhage rendered his recovery entirely hopeless.*

It was mercifully ordered, that his illness should not be attended with severe pain; and that until the last few days of his life, he should be in the perfect possession of his understanding. During that long and trying period of feebleness and apprehension, which preceded his dissolution, his Christian graces appeared unusually clear and bright; he enjoyed, in a greater degree, than in health, the consolations and hopes of the gospel, and ripened rapidly for glory. Peculiarly apparent were his humility and deep sense of unworthiness. "Of this," he often said, "I am sure, that salvation is all of grace." "I would make no mention of any thing, which I have ever thought, or said, or done; but only of this, that God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him

* The circumstances of his sickness and death are, for the most part, taken from the Memoir by Rev. Mr. Tappan, who had favorable opportunities for knowing them, and was with the family during the last days of the President's life, as a friend, on whom they relied much for comfort in their sore affliction.

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should not perish, but have everlasting life. The atonement is the only ground of hope." To a friend, that desired to know the state of his mind, he gave the following account. "In general, I am quite comfortable; but not uniformly so, though I have seldom what may be called distress or great anxiety. I have sometimes sweet views of God's holy providence. But I am, indeed, a poor sinner, lying at the foot of sovereign mercy. Most emphatically, and from my soul, do I renounce all hope in any thing done by myself, as a ground of justification. I fly, I fly with my whole soul to the blood of a crucified Saviour." When the progress of his disease did not permit him to lead in the devotions of the family, that service was generally performed by one of the college Tutors. In a letter to the writer, in which he speaks of the exhibitions of Christian character and feeling in the President on these occasions, one of these gentlemen, Rev. Mr. Cummings, now of Portland, remarks: "Once in particular, I recollect, that the part of the prayer which had special reference to him, took the character of thanksgiving and praise. At the close of the service, he requested me to be seated, and then thanked me, for thanking God on his behalf, and expatiated upon the goodness of God to him, in a manner the most grateful and delightful. On these occasions, too, I had the most instructive and impressive demonstrations of his humility, and sole dependence for salvation on Jesus Christ our Saviour. If any man might hope for heaven on the ground of his own righteousness, I suppose it will be conceded, that President Appleton might; but I never heard a man more fully and unequivocally abjure such a basis of hope than he. I distinctly recollect his once closing a conversation on this subject with the following lines of Watts, uttered with a manner and emphasis peculiarly his own:

> 'Jesus, to thy dear faithful hands,
> My NAKED SOUL I trust.'"

In truth, a devout and thankful frame of mind was very con-

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spicuous. He frequently spoke of the goodness of God in ordering the various circumstances of his sickness; and uniformly mentioned every comfort, as a mercy from his hand. The latter part of the time, until his mind was disordered, he was accustomed on receiving his medicines, or a portion, however small, of any liquid, to ejaculate a petition for the divine blessing.

From his clear and impressive views of the perfection of Deity, and full confidence in the rectitude of his dispensations, proceeded a cordial submission to the divine will. He, at one time, expressed anticipations of severe suffering, supposing it to be unavoidable from the nature of his disease. His wife told him, she hoped he would not give himself anxiety on this account. He assured her, that he was not anxious, adding: The will of the Lord be done! He felt that he had ties to this world, as numerous, and as strong as most men. "I am not," he remarked in a letter to the Rev. Mr. Tappan, dated July 1, "indifferent to life. How can I be, with such a family as I have; so young, and so dependent on parental attention and guidance. But the event is with God; and I hope, that I am willing it should be so. I am not very anxious as to the event. I hope it is my desire, that Christ may be honored, whether by my life or death." In another letter, written soon after, having mentioned some particulars, relative to his disorder, he thus proceeds: "You see, my dear sir, that my prospects do not brighten, as to returning health. But God is holy, wise, and good. I am in his hands, what can I wish more? Jesus Christ has said, He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live. Blessed words! and blessed Saviour!" In an interview with a ministerial friend, after he began to consider his disease as likely to prove fatal, on being asked, if he could submissively leave his family with God, he replied: "I have been the happiest man in the world in my domestic connexions; I have endeavored faithfully to instruct my children, and they have conducted so as greatly to endear themselves to me. I shall leave them but little property, but they will be in the hands of him who made them. God has been uniformly good to me all my life, and it would now be

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very unreasonable for me to be unwilling to obey his summons." At a subsequent visit, the same friend having inquired what had been the state of his mind since he last saw him, "I have had lately," he said, "such views of God's character, as have made me feel very comfortable, very comfortable. But last night, after throwing up blood, I was somewhat discomposed, and found I could do nothing, but lie at the feet of a sovereign God."

During the summer before his decease, his friends were desirous that he should, if he were able, look over his manuscripts, and make selections from them, with a view to future publication. It was only after urgent importunity and with the hope, that it might be a means of usefulness, that he consented to do it, and then he engaged in it, as a work in which he felt but little interest. He laid aside a number of his lectures and sermons, from which, as he thought, a selection might be made, should his friends deem it advisable to commit them to the press. He was repeatedly requested to publish particular addresses, delivered to the graduating class at different commencements, but uniformly declined. At a meeting of the Alumni held on the evening of the commencement in 1818, a highly respectable committee was appointed to solicit copies of the addresses delivered by him to the successive classes of graduates during his presidency, with a view to their publication. It was not until two weeks before his death, that he consented to yield to their wishes, and then he did it with the prayer, indicative of his humility, that "God would make them, in some measure, useful; instrumental, at least, of reminding them of those affectionate feelings with which they were delivered." As has been more than once remarked to the writer by a distinguished friend and relative of the President, who visited him a few weeks before his departure, he seemed to have lost all regard for his own reputation. He, indeed, acknowledged, that he had cherished a desire for literary reputation, as what was becoming his station; "but now," said he, "this is all gone." The honors and distinctions of this world faded into nothingness, as the glories of the future state began to unfold themselves to his view.

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A single incident, which occurred near the close of his life, shows the affectionate interest he always cherished for the college. From the window of his chamber he frequently looked at the college buildings. One day, while fixing his eye upon them, he exclaimed, "Precious objects have ye been to me, but I resign you all for my God." The solicitude and anxiety which he was prone, when in health, to indulge for the institution, gave place during his sickness, to a firm reliance on God's gracious protection. A sentiment uttered by him, the expression of his strong faith in the Providence of God in regard to the institution, has been often repeated, to encourage its friends in hours of despondency: "God has taken care of the college, and God will take care of it." May such continue to be the confidence of its patrons and friends!

As death drew nigh, his hope ripened into assurance. Of what nature was the felicity which he anticipated, may be learned from the following circumstances. The inquiry was made, if he did not find satisfaction in the thought, that the happiness of heaven would never end. "Connect with it," he replied, "the thought of perfect holiness, and it is a glorious thought indeed." At another time, after exclaiming: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive glory, and honor, and riches, and blessing," he added, "There is joy in that song." Again, he declared, that he had more vivid and affecting apprehensions of the loveliness of the Saviour, and that in secret communion with him he often found himself using such expressions as "dear Jesus." "You know," said he, "I do not approve of such modes of address, but my views of his preciousness at times are so overpowering, that I feel constrained to adopt them."

About a week before his death, there was a return of hemorrhage. It occasioned extreme distress. It was feared by others, and by himself, that suffocation would ensue. As the family stood around him, looking for the moment, when he would expire, he suddenly obtained relief; and his first words were uttered in his own emphatic manner: "Good and upright is the

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Lord." After this attack it was noticed, that his frame was unusually agitated. One of the family supposing it to be occasioned by severe suffering, inquired if it were so. He replied: "The thought that a moment may introduce me to the full glories of God, is enough to overwhelm me." The next day he called his children to him, and with perfect composure gave to each of them, separately, what he considered his dying counsel. It was about this time that he said to an officer of college, who was at his bedside, "Pray for our students. Pray that God would revive his work among them. I think of them with much interest. Tell them I had intended to leave them my last advice, to be communicated after my decease; but it is now too late. My enfeebled powers will not permit." He was apprehensive, that the bleeding would return, and that he should not be able to survive it. Towards night, he requested to be raised a little in his bed, that he might see the setting sun. Having beheld it for a moment, he said, as he reclined his head upon the pillow, "before it dawns again, I shall be in glory." This expectation was not realized, for he was spared a week longer. During the greater part of the last five days, his mind was somewhat disordered; although at times he appeared perfectly rational, and uttered many interesting expressions. The last day he was evidently much in prayer. With his petitions praises were mingled. At length, after a long and painful struggle with the last enemy, about eight in the evening, on the 12th of November 1819, he fell asleep in Jesus.

Thus lived, and thus died, the revered and beloved Appleton. The purposes of Providence are inscrutable. That an individual enjoying the unmingled respect of the community, occupying a sphere of public usefulness which few could be found to fill, bound by the strongest ties of mutual confidence and affection to the institution, over which he presided, and to society, in all the great interests of which he largely participated, not to mention domestic endearments, which were never, in the case of any one, more tender and affecting, that such an individual should be cut down in the midst of his days, was a deep and un-

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fathomable mystery. Great solicitude had been felt for him, during his illness, throughout the community. It was the general feeling, that he could not be spared. The day of his death was a day of clouds and darkness. The knell of the chapel bell, which broke the stillness of the evening, announcing his departure to the college family and the neighborhood, fell with leaden weight on many hearts.

Every mark of respect was shown to his memory. The remains were carried to the Congregational church, which had been hung in black by citizens of the town. A sermon was preached on the occasion by Rev. Benj. Tappan of Augusta, and prayers were offered by Rev. Dr. Gillet of Hallowell. After religious services, the body was followed by the bereaved family, the officers and students of the college, the Boards of Trustees and Overseers, and a large concourse of citizens, to the ancient cemetery, a mile south from the college plain, where it was deposited with many sighs and tears. In the year following, it was removed to the new cemetery, opened in the pine grove in the rear of the colleges, and a marble monument was erected over it by the Boards of college with an appropriate Latin inscription.

Having recounted the leading events of President Appleton's life, and his multiplied labors, it remains for the writer to attempt a view of his intellectual and moral character. In doing this he will necessarily repeat some observations, which have been already made.

It is a happy circumstance, that to those who had the privilege of being within the sphere of Dr. Appleton's influence, and who had an opportunity of knowing him, there is little difficulty, with a common share of observation, in seizing upon the prominent features of his character, although, indeed, none but those who were in habits of familiar acquaintance with him, who saw him in private and domestic life, can detect its more delicate hues. As has been justly remarked, in reference to an attempt to pourtray his character, "there are minds which af-

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fect the beholder with such an intuitive and constant sense of their superiority, that he is ready to imagine, the best praise he could bestow upon them would be a simple transcript of the impressions, they habitually produce upon him. Their talents are not so much gathered from their writings, nor interwoven with incidental associations, as perceived directly in their own strong and self-emitted light; not remembered, as were Goldsmith's, but like Johnson's, immediately felt and involuntarily acknowledged. Discovering an admirable tone and high determination of intellectual capacity, and concentration of faculties, unusually disciplined and prompt, they appear destined by nature not passively to reciprocate the movements of other minds, but to communicate their own; not merely to transmit the current of passing thought, but to propel and increase the stream. Theirs seems the prerogative to restamp the triter coinage of human opinion, and imprint upon the bullion of truth the permanent character of their own fervid and elevated genius. Operating within their sphere by an action uniformly sustained, their influence is insensibly propagated in the sentiments, and sometimes reflected in the manners of an extensive portion of the community; never permitting us to forget the original vigor of their elements, nor the organic energy of their powers."* It is indeed true of the subject of this memoir, that one could not have even casually fallen into his company, without feeling, that he was in the presence of an uncommon man. His private conversation and his public services, gave at once impression of his intellectual and moral superiority. Nor can one read his works without having such an impression deepened.

Among the prominent mental characteristics of President Appleton, may be mentioned *strength and originality*. The cast of his mind was decidedly in favor of such exercise, as requires the most vigorous powers of understanding. He grappled with the most intricate questions that arise in mental and moral philosophy, or in theology. From the commencement of his ministry, he habitually revolved such topics, and, as is remarked by

* Sketch, &c.

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his friend, the author of the Sketch, he never shone to more advantage, than when discoursing upon subjects of this nature in such points of light, as favored the exhibition of powers, for which a Clarke and a Butler were pre-eminent. His, however, was far from being that intellectual strength which moves heavily along. He had much elasticity of mind. He was fond of discussion, and took great pleasure in a play of argument, not from a consciousness of superiority, or from a desire of victory; but from his love of intellectual excitement and of truth. He was exceedingly astute, keen-sighted to detect the fallacy of an opponent, and, at the same time, conducted a discussion with the utmost candor and good nature. His instinctive sense of propriety forbade him ever to violate the laws which should regulate it.* It was said of him, while he was yet a young man, by the late Rev. Dr. Spring of Newburyport, Mass., "No man knows better how to ask a question than Mr. Appleton." It is believed that others not unskilled in theological science, have had occasion to feel the correctness of such an observation. "It may be added," says the author of the Sketch, in allusion to the remark of Dr. Spring, "that the inquiries, addressed to him by those best capable of appreciating his powers, were apt, when opportunity invited, to be indicative of the deference they entertained for his understanding. It was delightful on such occasions to witness the interest with which he addressed himself to his subject, and the luminous, succinct, and vigorous operations of intellect he was accustomed to exhibit."

The theological lectures of Pres. Appleton, in particular, afford evidence of the strength and elastic vigor of his understanding. They will, doubtless, ever be regarded as admirable models of sound logic and convincing argumentation.

That he had a marked predilection for analytical investiga-

* "Few," remarks the author of the Sketch, "have been able to conduct a discussion with others, in a manner both adapted to lead them to exercise their own understandings, to take the measure of their own positions, and behold in a clear light the proper foundations of such just opinions, as they might entertain."

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tions and elementary views, will readily occur to a careful reader of his writings. It may be added also, that he enforced the application of such views with great skill and effect. Instances illustrative of this propensity, may be seen in his Baccalaureate addresses, which, from the nature of the occasion not admitting of extended discussion, required of him, in order to produce the effect designed, to adopt a style of composition at once concise and energetic. He often condenses a train of argument into a single sentence, and even a single expression. In the writings of few of the present day can there be found, within the same compass, more passages, which contain great elementary principles, expressed with the sententious brevity of ancient wisdom.

This tendency of his mind to form simple, philosophical views, or, in other words, to generalize, enabled him, beyond most men, to give an air of novelty to the most common topics. The reader may be referred for illustration, to his remarks on profaneness, in the lecture on "the Dangers of a College life and its security," and to those on Independence of Character, and on the Essential Difference of Moral actions. "The secret was, not the color he threw upon subjects, but the powerful light he sent through them. His was the originality, so different from that which frequently bears the name, that was indebted, not to the efforts of an inventive imagination, but to the severity, with which it was restrained; that consisted, not in creating specious combinations, but in dissolving them. Its effect was, not surprize, but conviction; not a splendid confusion of ideas, but thoughts reduced to order and cleared from obscurity."

It remains simply to remark on the point we are now considering, that if the degree in which men influence the minds of others is a proof of original power, Pres. Appleton possessed it in large measure. The success with which he moulded the minds of his pupils, has been already mentioned; and few men of retired habits of life, by personal efforts or by their writings, have done more than he, to swell that tide of influence which flows to refresh and bless the moral world.

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Another characteristic trait of Dr. Appleton's understanding was its *clearness*. His mental processes were, in a remarkable degree, unclouded. He was never satisfied with imperfect, or ill-defined conceptions. He could keep steadily in view a train of thought, and survey it in all its bearings. He was accustomed thus to meditate thoroughly a subject, on which he proposed to write, a practice which he used to recommend strongly to his pupils; and after he had arranged his thoughts, he not unfrequently wrote page after page with but few erasures. How well he succeeded in communicating what was clear in his own mind with perspicuity and force to the minds of others, is well known. It may be said with strict truth, that he would never speak, unless he perceived precisely the thought he wished to convey. To this precision both of thought and language, his habits of metaphysical abstraction contributed much. Mr. Stewart, in his valuable essay on the varieties of intellectual character, remarks, that "perhaps the most valuable fruit, individuals, who are habitually occupied with metaphysical studies, derive from their researches, is that scrupulous precision in the use of language, upon which, more than upon any one circumstance whatever, the logical accuracy of our reasonings, and the justness of our conclusions, essentially depend." The language of Dr. Appleton, for clear, nervous expression of thought, challenges comparison with that of any writer.

To those who were not acquainted with him, it might appear, that his powers of acquisition were not preeminent. Such an impression, doubtless, arose in part from the entire absence in him of all love of display. His self respect and elevation of character rendered him incapable of cherishing a vain-glorious spirit. This impression arose also, in part, from his habitual circumspection in receiving facts, or adopting opinions. But it is perfectly consistent with the deductions of mental philosophy to suppose, that his mind did not advance to conclusions with the rapidity of most others; not because he was slow to perceive, but because he was never passive in receiving knowledge. The cast of his intellect led him to discover relations which es-

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cape the notice of ordinary minds. Another remark of Mr. Stewart may with justice be applied to him. "They who are possessed of much acuteness and originality, enter with difficulty into the views of others; not from any defect in their powers of apprehension, but because they cannot adopt opinions, which they have not examined; and because their attention is often seduced by their own speculations." (Elements, Chap. 6. S. 8.) He was, in fine, not so much a man of particular facts, as of general principles. Those who were favored with an opportunity of observing the operations of his mind, must be struck with the felicity and justness of the expression applied to him in the Sketch, that his "grasp of truth was equally cautious and energetic." It must not, however, be understood, that there was any deficiency in his powers of acquisition. His various and extensive learning is altogether inconsistent with such a supposition.

He was a man of *independent thought*. The progress of his opinions on the various subjects, which he mastered in theology, moral and intellectual philosophy, and criticism, if we may judge of the whole from what is known of a part, would show, that though he ever manifested a sincere respect for the honored names that have adorned learning and religion, he was independent of any authority, except that of truth. His independence, however, did not degenerate into a spirit of bold, daring speculation, itself perhaps, not unfrequently, the consequence, if not the indication, of a want of true independence. He knew the limits of the human understanding, and did not venture on airy wings to pass beyond. His keen eye penetrated the region of misty doubt and error, and he steadfastly gazed, until the fair form of truth was revealed to his delighted vision. When once he was convinced, that he had rightly interpreted her dictates, whether in relation to speculation or conduct, nothing could induce him to disregard them. Fearless of consequences when the light of truth beamed upon his path, it was only where his way was buried in darkness, that he was known to hesitate or waver. Nor did he cherish, in the

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least, that pride of reason, which, not unfrequently, exalts itself above the revealed will of God. His reverence for the truths of revelation, and his cheerful submission to their authority, were pre-eminent.

As has been already intimated, when he settled in the ministry, there were some topics in theology, on which he appears not to have formed fixed opinions; a circumstance, in his case, surely creditable to his freedom from the shackles of system, as well as to his conscientious regard for truth. He knew the power of truth and his own strength well enough, to trust himself to canvass opinions differing from his own. It has been remarked of him with force and justice, "that on certain points, in regard to which others have imagined, that they saw clearly, and were authorized to speak positively, he was far more cautious and doubtful. He knew so much about them, as to know how little can be known." His correspondence, his communications to the religious periodicals of the time, and, most of all, his private papers, show that for years he bestowed upon these subjects diligent and prayerful study. Indeed his vigorous, untiring pursuit of truth ended only with life. These well known traits of his intellectual character add great weight to his opinions. We cannot but receive them, as the result of most careful investigation and patient thought, and may reasonably claim for them the highest respect bestowed on human authority.

Says a distinguished divine,* with whom he was from his college days on terms of free and intimate friendship, "He was, as I have supposed through life, an ardent and indefatigable student; ever pursuing truth through all her haunts, and though not a revolutionist in science, ever opening his candid and ca-

* Rev. Dr. Dana of Newburyport, Mass.

The writer, having heard that high commendation had been repeatedly and publicly bestowed in the Seminary at Andover on the Lectures of Pres. Appleton, especially those on the Demoniacs of the New Testament, addressed a note to Prof. Stuart, to ascertain how far this was the case. He is happy in being able to introduce the following testimonial, from such a source, to the value of the Lectures

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pacious mind to new discoveries. In the department of mental and moral philosophy, in which Dr. Appleton so much excelled, I have supposed him a Baconian of the genuine stamp;—cool and thorough in his investigations, averse to bold theories, not inclined to advance to his conclusions *per saltum*, capable of seeing difficulties, of appreciating objections, as well as arguments, and equally distant from the skeptic and the dogmatist."

It is most commonly the case, that those who are distinguished for the mental traits which have been mentioned, cultivate the intellect at the expense of the imagination and taste. It was not so with Dr. Appleton. He was endued with more than ordinary powers of imagination. He had an uncommonly quick perception of poetical beauties, and a keen relish for the pleasures of taste. Cowper and Thompson were favorite poets. He cherished high admiration for Milton; the strength and high moral and religious tone of Young commended his poetical writings much to his feelings. He was an admirer of the pathos and nature of Burns, whose best pieces he often read aloud in his family, enunciating the Scotch dialect with great facility and effect. The Cotter's Saturday Night never failed to call forth a gush of feeling, which often showed itself in tears. The Soldier's Dream of Campbell always deeply affected him. During his last sickness, he derived great satisfaction from the devotional pieces of Cowper, Doddridge, and Watts. There is reason, indeed, to believe, that

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which had then been published, as well as to the general merits of their author as a Divine.

"I can truly say, that I regard Pres. Appleton as one of the most solid, sober, judicious and enlightened theological writers which our country has produced, so far as I can judge from the specimens that have come before me. I am much gratified, that all his important efforts are now to be laid before the public. I cannot doubt the success of the publication, in case what is yet unpublished is like to that which is already published. I wish much success to your undertaking.

"Few men, indeed, discuss with such candor, kindness toward opponents, coolness, acuteness, nice balancing of the weight of arguments, as Pres. Appleton, so far as I am able to judge."

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his imagination and fancy were rather inclining to exuberance, and that he restrained their flow. In his earlier days, he manifested some inclination for poetic composition; to what extent he indulged it, is not known. His writings, while they afford abundant evidence of his powers of imagination, exhibit throughout the marks of a severe chastisement. They never weary by dryness and want of vivacity even in the most abstruse discussions; they never startle by any thing extravagant or misplaced. They are enriched, sparingly indeed, yet with the ornaments of an affluent and highly cultivated genius.

Thus was the balance of his intellectual powers admirably preserved. No one faculty was cultivated at the expense of the rest. No one study, however attractive, was suffered to intrench on the ground appointed to another. His views of the true object and the proper method of mental discipline were just and philosophical. They are in part exhibited in his address to the graduating class of 1812, in which he inculcates the importance of efforts directed so as to promote a full developement, a healthful growth of all the powers of mind. What he taught, he faithfully practised, and the result was a discipline which few comparatively have attained. He indulged in himself no mental predilections, merely for the sake of such indulgence: he, least of all, countenanced such a course in those under his influence. What is specially important in him who is at the head of a literary institution, and is, indeed, characteristic of a truly enlightened and liberal mind, he had enlarged views of learning. Philology, metaphysical and moral science, theology, polite literature and natural science, all received from him a due share of attention, and their value and importance were maintained in his public discourses, as well as enforced by personal counsel and efforts.

The *moral characteristics* of Pres. Appleton were, perhaps, yet more marked than his intellectual traits. They were altogether pre-eminent. What first struck the mind of an observer was his *high tone of moral and religious feeling*. Partly as

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the result of natural endowments, and partly of cultivation, he had, in common with few men, a perception of moral fitness, at once intense and intuitive. The whole frame work of his moral character, if the expression may be permitted, was constructed with a nice adaptation of parts, and a peculiar delicacy of workmanship. In him, a virgin purity of moral feeling was always apparent. It informed his whole character. It governed his intercourse with others, and led him to regard scrupulously their rights and feelings. His keen sensibility was peculiarly marked in his sacred regard for truth, and this, too, not merely in the common intercourse of life, but in those respects, which escape the notice of men of ordinary sensibility. He was much moved by a story, contained in a popular tract published some years since, until informed that it was a fiction, when he was manifestly shocked by the statement, and regretted he had ever seen the tract, regarding it as an inexcusable fraud, an outrage on the moral sense of the community. To remark, that he had no sympathy with those, however elevated their standing, who do not hesitate, in order to effect even laudable designs, to practice art and management, were almost an injury to his name. He shrunk intuitively from chicanery and intrigue.

Indeed the writer does not fear the charge of exaggeration, when he asserts, that for a delicate regard for the rights, feelings and opinions of others, he was never surpassed. He never exhibited an arrogant or overbearing temper. He lived at a time, when a spirit of religious controversy had arisen in New-England. One, who, like him, had sounded the depths of theological science, who cherished an ardent love of truth, and a profound reverence for revelation, could not but have been deeply interested in the religious aspect of the times. He had written enough on disputed points to show what his temper would have been, had he embarked on the troubled waters of controversy. A most able logician, and keen-sighted, skilful disputant, he yet exhibited the utmost fairness and candor. He would never take undue advantage of an opponent. It seemed

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as if no provocation could disarm him of his Christian meekness. He contended not for victory, but for truth. But he was independent of party, and shrunk from the strife and turmoil which agitate the breast, and harass the life of a polemic. In a letter to a friend, he remarks: "I hope it will please God to give me the unspeakable privilege of passing this life, without being implicated in political or theological controversy." He then adds the following caution: "A person who is right, is, by controversy, in danger of having his temper embittered; a person who is wrong, is in danger of being confirmed in error. It is extremely difficult for us to be impartial in controversy, especially if ill used." He never could sympathize with the denunciatory spirit, which is too common even among the professed followers of the Saviour. No one felt, indeed, a deeper abhorrence of that disrespect for the inspired word, and that spirit of free and arrogant speculation, which had, in some degree, manifested itself, but he was the last person to resort to any other means of resisting its progress than argument and persuasion; much less could he tolerate measures, the tendency of which was to restrict freedom of inquiry. When there were indications, in any quarter, of a design to extend the power of ecclesiastic control to matters of opinion, no one regarded the movement with more jealousy or distrust.

His moral sense was as enlightened and comprehensive, as it was susceptible. Its decisions were based on those immutable principles of rectitude, which, independent of law, regulate the conduct of holy beings throughout the universe, and are recognized by Deity himself. There was also in him, at all times, in lively exercise, a profound reverence for the authority and will of Jehovah. Beyond most public teachers, he had a faculty of impressing on the minds of those, who were under his influence, their obligations to obey the divine law. How important this power was to him, as the head of a literary institution, need only be stated. The grateful recollections of numbers, as well as his works, bear witness, how much his efforts were directed to this point, to give his pupils a deep sense of the infinitely holy God,

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of his rightful authority, and of our obligations to him; and how he sought to implant in their minds a standard of moral action, elevated and immovable. It has been extremely well said in regard to him, that "in him the moral sense seemed to possess the property of genius; such a force was it able to throw into his expression of moral sentiment. It was a force, he had the secret of applying with a pressure so steady, and an intensity so powerful, that none, whose sensibility was accessible, could be unmoved by it."* It may well be doubted, whether any individual was ever permitted to listen to his instructions and hear his earnest appeals on the great topics of moral and religious duty, who does not yet retain, in some degree at least, the impressions which were then made. Let it be added, also, that, more than most men, his personal influence in all situations,—in the pulpit, in the public exercises of the college, in the society of his friends, and at his fireside, embodied the spirit of his public teaching. All regarded him as eminently a holy man.

Although the *character of his piety* may be inferred from the statements which have been already made, yet it may be well to attempt to convey a distinct view of its more prominent features. Those who were best acquainted with him would probably unite in the sentiment, that his religious character was most strongly marked by habitual reverence for God and sacred things. With great emphasis may it be said of him, that he lived as seeing him who is invisible. "To what subject soever his conversation was directed, or with whatever pleasantness relieved, it seldom approached a sacred topic, however incidentally, without discovering signs of his interior respect for every thing of a serious nature." His confidence in the perfect character and righteous government of Jehovah was also very apparent.

His piety, moreover, was characterized by the spirit of elevated devotion with which it was animated. He was eminently a man of prayer. His devotions in the family, in the college chapel, and in the sanctuary, were those of one, who lived near

* Sketch, &c.

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to God; and his habitual deportment evinced, that he cultivated, with uncommon assiduity, an intercourse with heaven. He was known to be much in the habit of ejaculatory prayer. "If, however, there are those, who make their prayers a substitute for the discharge of moral duties, it was not so with him. There was in him in constant, vigorous exercise, a genuine principle of integrity; and he aimed at universal rectitude of feeling and of practice. Hence, in every relation and circumstance, he exhibited, with singular uniformity, the Christian temper and deportment." He manifestly desired with most earnestness to advance in the divine life. His mind was intent on divine things. In his journal, dated Jan. 1803, he writes: "In the course of the past year, I think, I have had some encouragement to study the Scriptures attentively, by receiving some increase of light on those places, to which my attention has been most directed. For every ray of knowledge I desire to bless and praise the Father of lights. I would thank him, as well for the present pleasure of it, as for the advantage to be derived from it. Of all kinds of knowledge, I desire that the most ardently, which relates to Christ and his gospel." Again he remarks under date of December 1814: "One week of tender, lively and prayerful views of God, Christ, and the gospel, is better than years of intellectual research, that has no near connexion with Jesus and his religion. O God, make me spiritual!"

Although none could doubt the elevation or the depth of his religious feeling, he was not accustomed, at any period of life, to be very confident of his own piety. The only evidence on which he thought it safe to rely, was derived, as he expresses himself in his journal, from the perception in himself of those qualities which the gospel requires; and when he compared his own attainments with the high demands of the gospel, he could not readily convince himself, that he had passed from death unto life. In truth, a prominent feature of his religious character was its unfeigned humility. His journal affords evidence, that he had habitually a sense of unworthiness, at times indeed so

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intense, as to utter itself in expressions of the most profound self abasement.

As might be expected from his high tone of moral feeling, President Appleton was a man to cherish a *sense of responsibility*. But, to the great responsibilities, which rested upon him, he was peculiarly alive. He was eminently a conscientious man. In his parish, in his office of President, his motto was "*exertion and duty*." This sense of responsibility he bore with him every where. Hence it used to be said of him, that he was every where the President; and it was so in truth; not however so much from any undue importance he attached to the dignity of his station, as from his desire never to detract from the high character which such an office demands. It was his misfortune, that responsibility pressed at times too heavily upon him. It has been said of him, that "for prudence and circumspection, few have been more remarkable." He was never off his guard. He always weighed well before he decided, and hence it was, that he seldom was compelled to retract his opinions. "The centinel at the door of his lips was ever at his post." His caution, however, did not beget indecision or want of firmness.

It need scarcely be added that he was a man of true *magnanimity*. His sensibilities were acute, and he was too scrupulous an observer himself of those principles of justice and courtesy which regulate the intercourse of men, not to feel the infraction of these rules by others. But his mind and character took too high a range to be assailed by petty jealousies or ensnared by offended pride. In the administration of collegiate discipline, there is frequent opportunity of exhibiting this virtue, and it is believed, that no student, however he might be dissatisfied with his official acts, ever alleged any thing to his disadvantage, inconsistent with the trait here attributed to him. A single incident, illustrative of his magnanimity, may be stated. Great dissatisfaction was produced, in one instance, by some act of the college government in the class which was soon to be graduated. After the class had manifested their feelings, in various

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ways to him, personally, and had occasioned him great trouble and anxiety, instead of resorting to the usual methods of discipline to which the offenders had obviously exposed themselves, he declined the graduating fees prescribed by the college laws. His acceptance of the fee was repeatedly solicited, but he was inflexible. This procedure, conducted, as it was, with that calm, impressive dignity, altogether peculiar to him, proved to be far more mortifying and humbling, than would have been the high punishment justified by the offence. As creditable to the generosity of his disposition, it may be stated, that a grant in his favor having been made by the Boards of college, for extra services performed in consequence of the death of one of the tutors, in consideration of the limited means of the institution, he declined accepting their generous offer, although he was dependent for the support of his family upon a salary by no means large.

It may be instructive to some who are prone to despond in regard to themselves, as it ought to be to those of the opposite character, to know, that the subject of this memoir formed a humble estimate of himself; and those who are puffed up by a little learning, and who are disposed to thrust themselves into public notice, may well be rebuked by the fact, that the learned and accomplished Appleton, was not unfrequently much depressed in view of the degree in which he fell short of the standard of attainment, which he thought his situation demanded. Such feelings of despondency, however, instead of enervating, invigorated his energies.

It was this combination of high moral excellencies, which, more than his commanding powers of mind, gave him a weight of character, possessed by few. Incapable of the common arts used to gain influence; a man not to make himself felt in promiscuous society by remarkable powers of conversation or debate, or by his skill in putting in operation a complicated machinery of action; in short, one, whose habits and predilections favored retired, more than public life, he always exerted an important influence. He was beloved and revered. His

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opinions were greatly valued, because they were known to be the result of deliberate reflection, ever guided by a pure love of truth and right. In periods of trial and perplexity, from many, who remember with great satisfaction, his cool, discriminating reason, his candor and fairness, and the purity and elevation of his character, the earnest, though vain wish has, doubtless, often arisen, that his wisdom and counsel had been spared longer to bless his friends and the community.

It is believed, that those who best knew Pres. Appleton, and who revered him most in the public station which he held, loved to think of him also, as he appeared in the bosom of his family. No one was fitted to enjoy more in domestic life than he; few have enjoyed so much. His tenderness and ardor of feeling, his delicacy of character, and the all pervading spirit of piety, which shone with a pure radiance over his whole life, threw a peculiar charm around his fireside. It was the home of taste, refinement and affection. It exhibited a most delightful picture of the domestic virtues. The affections of all its members clustered around him, and his, in return, were constantly flowing out towards them in acts of kindness and love. "At home," remarks Dr. Nichols, "he never discovered that relaxation and irritability of fibre, too often betrayed in domestic life by those, whose exertions to please in other situations are the most ambitious. But his private character for dignity, equanimity, and amiableness is mentioned with marked affection and respect by those, who were frequent visitors, and especially, inmates for considerable periods in his family." Indeed the tenderness and depth of his attachments were such as characterize minds alone of "a diviner mould."

This was made evident when, in the providence of God, his youngest child, a son of uncommon loveliness and promise, about three years old, was very suddenly removed by death, an event to which allusion has already been made. Although he bowed, at once, in meek submission to the chastisement, it was apparent, that he was much shaken by the affliction. As he stood at the

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grave-side, surrounded by his family, the students of college, and his friends and neighbors, his eyes streaming with tears, and his countenance betraying the anguish of the spirit within, his appearance attracted notice, and the deepest sympathy was felt for the revered mourner. He was sensibly affected by a delicate attention to his feelings, manifested by the college choir, who, at evening prayers performed with much taste Pleyel's Hymn in the words, "So fades the lovely, blooming flower," etc. It will be seen that he feelingly, and beautifully alludes to this bereavement, in his address at the ensuing commencement. He also makes repeated reference to the event in his private journal. Under date of Dec. 4, 1817, which was the day of annual Thanksgiving, after alluding to other topics, he thus proceeds: "Now, as to my family; what remain are in health and prosperity. Blessed be God, his mercies are very great to us, unworthy sinners. But oh, we have not the same number which we had the last Thanksgiving. On the 19th of October, our dear John, a most beautiful, affectionate, interesting child, was snatched from our embraces in a very sudden manner. I love the very grave, where his dear remains are deposited. But the Lord is most righteous in sending this affliction. God had tried us with mercies for a long time. He had threatened us often, but we did not improve, in a suitable manner, either his mercies or his judgments. At length he assumed the rod with decision. In faithfulness has he afflicted us. It is right, we needed affliction. I hope we have been able to feel some submission. But, without his grace, it will do us no permanent good." He seemed indeed to take satisfaction in reviving the remembrance of his sorrow. The date on two of his sermons reads thus: "Oct. 19. The day on which my dear John died." "Oct. 1817, after the death of our dear John." His visits to the grave of this beloved child, were frequent, particularly after his health began to fail. The lines on the stone, which marks the grave, indicate the tenderness of his love, and the depth of his grief. Having been much interested in preparing a suitable inscription, they occurred to him in a dream, and he immediate-

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ly adopted them. Their beauty and pathos will strike the reader.

> "The rose bud had begun to open
> Its leaves, and diffuse its fragrance.
> In one night came a deadly frost:
> In the morning its tints were faded,
> And its leaves were withering on the ground.
> He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down."

He never recovered from the shock which this blow gave to his sensibilities.

Although he was a fond parent, his affection never weakened his authority. The conduct of his children towards him was, to an uncommon degree, the expression of the most devoted love combined with the highest respect. He made himself their companion,and took a sincere interest in their pleasures and pursuits. The cares and labors of his station did not prevent him from superintending their studies, and he instructed them much himself. His walks and rides with them were made no less seasons of improvement, than of delight to them. He took great pains to imbue their minds with useful knowledge, to inculcate the principles of a correct taste, to cultivate moral and religious feeling, and to lead them to the knowledge and acceptance of the Saviour. He often retired with them for private conversation and prayer. Few parents probably can declare, as he did, a short time before his decease: "I have endeavored faithfully to instruct my children."

He did not confine his affections to his own family. He was most fondly attached to his numerous connexions, at the same time that he enjoyed their unmingled respect and affection. His dwelling, moreover, was the abode of generous hospitality. Strangers received every attention that true politeness and good will could dictate, and friends, a heartfelt welcome. Seldom, may it be said almost with literal truth, was his table without a guest. His habitual circumspection and gravity, particularly in general society, produced in him an appearance of reserve, which might, at times, have led a casual acquaintance to infer,

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that he was, in some measure, recluse in his habits and feelings. But the mistake was soon discovered. However he might be pressed by care and labor, he was always accessible to those who sought counsel, or who needed sympathy. Of the pleasures of social intercourse he was peculiarly susceptible. In the family circle, or among his more intimate friends, his vivacity, which often became playfulness, and his delicate humor, of which he had a large store always at command, made him a most agreeable companion; that he was always an instructive one need not be added. With how much zest he engaged in conversation, when important topics were discussed, and how much to the delight and improvement of others, has been already remarked.

The following impressions and recollections of him, as he appeared in domestic life, are contained in a letter from a relative. "I am fully persuaded, that few comparatively were able to estimate his character. Its cast was peculiar;—its lights and shades,—shades produced by an occasional sombre cast of feeling, were beautifully blended. While the glance of a stranger would have decided at once, that he was dignified almost to majesty, the children, and those who were occasional inmates in the family, found themselves instinctively gathering closer around him, while his interest in conversation would flush his cheek, and light up his clear blue eye with an expression, which can never be forgotten. Sometimes he would draw largely from his store of anecdote, or carry on a conversation with a friend with abundance of ready wit. This propensity, I always thought, he restrained; but it would sometimes burst forth, sally after sally; and he enjoyed it in others. I think that he had naturally a keen relish for the pleasures of conversation.—I often love to recall his exquisite sensibility to all that was touching or beautiful. What a devout admirer was he of the beauties of the Scriptures. You recollect how his prayers were interwoven with the sublimest passages from the Prophets and Psalms, till you felt, as he ever seemed to feel, in a remarkable degree, that you were treading on holy ground. The beauties

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of English poetry, too, you remember, he warmly appreciated. There were some of the little, unpretending productions of Campbell, Wordsworth, etc., that would move him to tears. You recollect the delight with which he occasionally read Scotch poetry. It was ever a treat to him to come out from his study, after his mental energies had been severely tasked, and read, for an half hour, aloud the most exquisite productions of Burns."

Nor were his sympathies confined to his family, and friends, and the College. The impression which was left upon the community in regard to him, and which still remains, shows how largely he participated in the various interests of society. Universally respected and revered, he was also universally beloved. To this day, frequent testimonials may be heard, from people of all conditions in the town of Brunswick, to his kindness, his unostentatious benevolence, and his unaffected sympathy with them both in their joys and their sorrows. He, moreover, loved his country and his species. "Among his many excellent qualities, his strong attachment to the happy forms of government, with which the American republics are blessed; his high sense of the duties of a good citizen, and the solicitude he displayed to inculcate upon the students an enlightened and conscientious attention to them through life, must not be overlooked. Avoiding in public all questions of a party nature, he aimed assiduously to cultivate in their breasts a deep respect for the fundamental principles on which the happiness and welfare of society must stand."* As a specimen of the earnestness and force with which he sought to discharge the duty, as an instructor of her youth, he felt that he owed to his country, reference may be made to his last baccalaureate address.

He was also ardently attached to the cause of truth and benevolence throughout the world. He hailed, with sincere joy, indications of the progress of human society. Whatever had a bearing on the prosperity of learning and general improvement, excited his warm interest. In any movement which had for its object the advance of letters, as well as the higher and more

* Sketch, etc.

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sacred interests of our race, his active co-operation was always to be depended on. He was deeply interested in the cause of liberal education, and would have witnessed with great satisfaction the increased attention which it has received within the few last years, although he would have discountenanced, strongly and decidedly, the spirit, which has mistaken innovation for improvement. He hoped much from a project, which was started among the instructors of the New England Colleges, to hold annual conventions, in order to consult on the interests of liberal education in our country, and to co-operate for its advancement. Two or three meetings were held, at which he was present and took an active part in the deliberations. In accordance with one feature of their proposed plan of operations, he contributed a dissertation on an important topic of English Criticism, which was read at the next session after his decease. This dissertation appears among his works.

It was also apparent, that "he earnestly desired the diffusion of Christian truth and virtue. Whatever menaced evil to the Church of Christ, he viewed with alarm; whatever appeared conducive to its extension and prosperity, he hailed with delight. He considered it a peculiar favor, that he lived in so glorious an age, and was permitted to witness events so auspicious to the best interests of mankind. Exertions for the distribution of the Scriptures, for evangelizing the heathen, for educating pious young men for the gospel ministry, for promoting the principles and spirit of peace, for preventing and suppressing vice, he beheld with lively interest and devout thankfulness and joy; and as opportunity presented, was ever ready to aid them by his counsels, charities and labors.*"

The public performances of Pres. Appleton were from the first, admired. Incidental notices of them have been introduced, as we have advanced in our account of his life; but his powers, as a public speaker, were so marked and peculiar, that they deserve distinct consideration.

* Memoir, etc.

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We remark, in the first place, that his public services were, in a high degree, impressive. Different circumstances contributed to the effect which he uniformly produced. His personal appearance, itself remarkably fitted to command the respectful attention of an auditory, has been already noticed. His voice was clear, deep-toned and melodious. His utterance was precise and emphatic, perhaps to a fault in any one but himself; for if employed to convey the thoughts of an ordinary mind, it might have savored of affectation. "It would ill accord with any intellectual or moral inferiority with which it should be connected; or rather it may be said, that no such inferiority could imitate this elocution in a higher degree, than would be barely sufficient to remindan aud ience of the original."* He used but little action. He was never impassioned. His mode of discussing topics contributed, most of all, to his power over the minds of his hearers. In the best sense of the expression, he was, more than most others, a rational preacher. He addressed not the passions, but the reason and the conscience, and he could, with such matchless skill, divest error of its disguises, and present truth in its simple majesty, that "it was difficult for those who heard him, not to feel, that they were accountable beings; that their Creator had a perfect right to their love and obedience, that by their transgression they had incurred his just displeasure; and that it must needs be a fearful thing to fall into his hands. Religion appeared, most evidently, a reasonable service; and the sinner often found himself convicted, at the bar of his own conscience, of the most egregious folly."† Another circumstance, of much importance to a public speaker, especially to a preacher of the gospel, greatly aided him; the facility, which he possessed to a remarkable degree, of throwing into his performance all the force of his own conviction. It was apparent, that he felt the truths, he inculcated, to be real and momentous. Hence he had an earnestness of manner, which labored to produce in the minds of others a conviction, deep and influential, as his own, of the

* Sketch, etc. † Memoir, etc.

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value of the soul, and the certainty of eternal retributions. Remarking on his addresses, the Author of the Sketch says, "it were difficult to conceive of a manner more earnest and rivetting, than that in which they were delivered. It was an earnestness capable of transferring to the subject the praise due to the speaker; of leading the less prompt of apprehension to imagine they had felt the power of the sentiment, when they had rather been affected by the interest it excited in those around them, and by the energy of interior conviction with which it was uttered. No one perhaps was ever better acquainted with the art of enchaining an attention, he had seized, than Pres. Appleton; and, if the allusion may be permitted, of kneading the application of his subject into a mind, he had once compressed within his grasp."*

* A passage in an article on the character and writings of Pres. Appleton in the Biblical Repository and Quarterly Observer for Jan. 1836, so well exhibits the prominent traits of his eloquence, as a writer, that it is thought proper to introduce it in this connexion.

"For truth, wherever found, he searches with single-hearted aim; and what has been ascertained by careful research he illustrates with precision and enforces with a calm and tender earnestness. To guard himself and others from whatever is deceptive, to divest truth of all illusions from fancy and from feeling, to set it forth in its own pure and simple form, this seems to have been his great aim; and rather than hazard uncertain opinions, he would restrain himself from those stronger expressions by which minds less severely trained to investigations are prone to utter their convictions, but of this habit, leading him to contemplate religion as it is without us, rather than as it shapes itself within—as a series of inquiries to be answered, not less than a principle to be assumed as the guide of life and the source of hope; out of this fixed tendency to adjust the proportion of belief to the amount of well-weighed evidence, grew, we may presume, the fact that in his writings, (if we may repeat a somewhat antiquated distinction) religion is rather objective than subjective. It is not embodied in the subject of its influence, so much as delineated in its unchangeable objects and characters. It is not religion working its secret effects in the individual heart equally with religion assuming an outward and everlasting reality, removing objections to its truth, and unfolding the evidences by which the reason of man and the testimonies of God confine it. He is far, however, from the frigidness of feeling and the languor of imagination which are thought by many to characterize writers of this class. His affections were not those of the mere metaphysician; as, on the

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His manner of prayer was singularly solemn and impressive. He used much the language of scripture, particularly those sublime passages in which the majesty and perfections of Jehovah are brought to view. No one could listen to him in the devotions of the sanctuary or the family circle, without the feeling,

other side, his fancy was too vivid, his imagination too deep, for a barely practical talent. His whole mind seems in one word, to have been well proportioned and evenly balanced in its native elements. Whether their proportion and symmetry were retained through life, may be judged from the fact obvious to all who are familiar with his Works, that whatever were the original sensibilities of his heart, and they were certainly strong, or whatever his faculties of ideal conception, and they were by no means wanting, he brought them under a severe and steady subordination to the power of ascertaining and proving by logical deductions the elementary truths of morality and religion. Hence his eloquence is convincing rather than persuasive. We do not listen to him for winning words, for the voice sweeter than honey flowing from the lips; his is the chastened language of argument and conviction; his are quickening tones indeed, but yet quickening tones chiefly, if not only, because they are those of truth and soberness. We resort to him as a sage, not a declaimer; as the teacher of a self-guiding wisdom, not as the orator to take our wills captive to his own. As the instructions which he gives us thus acknowledge no dependence on the artifices of a splendid declamation, so have they as little affinity to that fantastic poetry of religion which leads us away from all outward things to converse with solitude and abstraction.

His philosophy, though spiritual, is rather discursive than ideal; a series of deductions, not a mystic, self-fed contemplation; a well proved faith quickening the whole mind, instead of an intense spirit inspiring faith. The great principles, in fact, of what used so fitly to be called *discourse*, of which Clarke and Butler and Edwards have furnished such wonderful examples, seem to have been wrought into his mind as an element of his being, and to have left their impression on all his writings. His intimacy with abstruse investigations does not impair, however, but increases the power and the worth of his practical instructions. To few writers indeed could the reference be made with greater assurance for proof that sound learning is wisdom as well as knowledge, an effective teacher of holy living as well as a guide to ethical science. What forms after all his grand peculiarity, is the precision, the perfect accuracy with which, by the application oftentimes of the simplest truism, he serves from a subject all which is adventitious, and presents the truth just as it is, in its own simple shape, divested of all, the very least incumbrances, so that nothing is left either to bewilder the eye, or to turn it away from the one undivided topic."

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that he was holding converse with heaven. It was once remarked by an individual of distinguished attainments, as a Christian, that "it was worth a journey to Brunswick to attend Commencement, in order to hear Pres. Appleton pray."

Many, whose names have been more extensively known, have owed their reputation, not so much to their own merit, as to a happy coincidence of circumstances. They seized a favorable moment, or were aided by the powerful influence of others. It was not so with the distinguished individual, a view of whose life and character has now been attempted. Not ambitious of reputation for its own sake, a man to be invited rather than to thrust himself into public notice, he yet attained a distinction which may satisfy any reasonable aspirant. He attained it also, as the reward of distinguished excellence. Under the blessing of heaven it was his own creation, not the offspring of good fortune. Pre-eminent original genius is not claimed for him. His mental endowments were undoubtedly of a superior order, but his living precepts and example show, — his own voice, could it speak from the dust, would declare, that he was indebted, less to the powers, distinguished as they were, which God had bestowed, than to an ardent, judicious and indefatigable cultivation of them. Let the student then be encouraged to emulate his admirable discipline. It is to be hoped also, that the reader, whatever may be his calling or station, may be incited to follow in his steps, of whom it has been truly said, that his life was not spent for itself, and his death, not confined to itself.

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The following is the inscription on his tomb stone referred to in the Memoir, which was prepared by Prof. Samuel P. Newman, who then held the Department of Ancient Languages in Bowd. College.

HUIC TUMULO MANDANTUR RELIQUIAE.

REV. JESSE APPLETON, S. T .D.

MARITI DESIDERATISSIMI, PATRIS OPTIMI,

ALMÆQUE NOSTRÆ ACADEMIÆ SECUNDI PRÆSIDIS.

Vir fuit ingenii acumine insignis, moribus
compositis, ac aspectu benigno
majestatem quandam præ se ferente :
sed morti inexorabili nihil est sanctum.
Eruditione magna,
inter literatorum principes justissime collocandus :
at Theologicæ scientiæ lauream præcipue meritus,
hac enim, quo homines audeant,
cognovit et tentavit.
Integra fide, disciplinaque salutari,
duodecim annos,
res Academicas administravit.
Nimiis tandem vigiliis laboribusque consumptus,
sublimi ejus animo supernis intento,
ad quietem se contulit.
Ita vixit, ut omnes moribundi, sic se vixisse,
velint; ita mortuus est,
ut omnes, sic se morituros esse, optarent:
tamen voluit inscribi, *se salutem sperasse in Jesu.*

Natus est Novem^{is} die 17mo Anno Domini MDCCLXXII.
Obiitque Novem^{is} die 12mo Anno Domini MDCCCXIX.

Senatus Academiæ Bowdoinensis,
summa reverentia,
hoc monumentum posuerunt.

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The following is a list of Discourses published during the life of the Author.

1. The immensity of God; a Sermon preached at Hampton, Nov. 14, 1797, at the Dedication of the New House, for Public Worship.

2. The sublime nature of Christianity proved by the extraordinary manner in which it was communicated to the world.—Preached at Greenland, May 1805, at the ordination of Rev. James A. Neal.

3. Two Discourses delivered at the North Meetinghouse in Portsmouth, June 16, 1805, it being the Sabbath succeeding the interment of Mrs. Mary Buckminster, consort of Rev. Dr. Buckminster.

4. A Sermon delivered at New Boston, N. H. Feb. 26, 1806, at the ordination of Rev. E. P. Bradford.

5. A Discourse delivered before the members of the Portsmouth Female Asylum at a third service on the Sabbath, Aug. 10, 1806.

6. God's care of his church; a Sermon delivered at Gorham, Jan. 18, 1809, at the ordination of Rev. Asa Rand.

7. * A Sermon delivered at Saco, Oct. 24, 1810, at the ordination of Rev. Jonathan Cogswell.

8. * A Sermon delivered at Augusta, Oct. 16, 1811, at the ordination of Rev. Benj. Tappan.

9. A Sermon delivered at Freeport, at the ordination of Rev. Reuben Nason.

10. Discourse delivered at Bath, May 11, 1813, before the Society for discountenancing and suppressing vices.

11. Discourse delivered June 20, 1813, before the officers and students of Bowdoin College, occasioned by the Death of Frederic Southgate, A. B. lately a Tutor in said College.

12. * A Sermon preached at Boston, at the Annual Election, May 1814.

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* Published in the present edition.

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13. * Perpetuity and importance of the Sabbath. A Sermon delivered at a Meeting of Citizens from most of the towns in the County of Cumberland, and from several in the Counties adjacent, held at Portland, Nov. 10, 1814, for the purpose of taking measures to promote the due observance of the Lord's Day.

14. Sermon delivered at Brunswick, April 13, 1815, appointed as a day of National Thanksgiving, by the President of the U. S. on account of the Peace, recently established between this Country and Great Britain.

15. * An Address delivered at Boston, before the Mass. Society, for suppressing intemperance, May 31, 1816.

16. * A Sermon delivered at Freeport at the ordination of Rev. Enos Merrill.

17. A Sermon delivered at Northampton, Sept. 18, 1817, before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

18. A Sermon delivered at Portland, Nov. 19, 1818, at the formation of the Maine Branch of the American Education Society.

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THEOLOGICAL LECTURES.

LECTURE I.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

The existence and attributes of God may be considered, as lying at the foundation of all religion, whether natural or revealed. In regard to the existence of God, it shall be my endeavor to prove,

1. That something has existed from eternity.
2. That the Being who existed from eternity is intelligent.

1. Something existed from eternity.

We are conscious of our own existence, and are taught by our senses, the existence of a great variety of other objects. With respect to ourselves and most of the objects which fall within our notice, it is confessedly certain, that *existence*, far from being eternal, is of recent origin. The plants, which decorated the earth, the last summer, began their existence at the opening of spring. Of the forest trees many have grown up within our own remembrance; others give such undeniable proof either of present increase or decay, as to preclude from every rational mind all idea of their having existed from eternity. That our own existence is not without beginning is equally beyond question. What then produced the present generation of plants, trees, and animals? Did they create themselves? The doctrine is too ab-

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surd to find an advocate. It supposes a thing capable of acting before it had existence. But, in order to act, it must exist; it must, therefore, both exist and not exist, at the same moment. If any thing can render this absurdity still more glaring, it is the following consideration; viz. if a power of creating could precede existence, other beings might be subject to it, as well as that one to whom it is supposed to belong. If a plant or animal, while yet it was not, could have acted to produce existence to itself; it might, with the same facility, have produced existence to other beings. If it could thus act, one moment before its existence, it might a year or a thousand years. So that it is wholly uncertain, whether that being who has been busily acting, either in creating or varying the world, for several thousand years, has even to this day, ever chosen to exist, or not.

Now, if self-creation is impossible to one being, it is so to all. Every object, therefore, whose existence is not eternal, is the effect of some cause. You will reply, perhaps, that all the plants and animals were created by their predecessors, i. e. that the parent creates his children, and the acorn creates the oak, which proceeds from it. But has the acorn any design? Does it first determine to form a tree, then fix its magnitude, prescribe its shape, the texture of its bark, the number, direction, and length of its branches; the form, color, and multitude of its leaves? The seed of a plant is no more able to create that organized body, which springs from it, than to produce a temple. The acorn can no more create an oak, than build a navy.

But even were it possible, that present objects should have been created by those, who immediately preceded them, an insuperable difficulty would still remain. It is as necessary to find a creator for the generations which are past, as for that which is present. The person or the plant, who lived a thousand years ago, could no more create itself, than those which are now before our eyes. Follow up the succession, as far as you please, no satisfaction can be obtained, no resting place can be

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found, until you arrive at a cause, which was not preceded by any other; but which existed without beginning.

There have not been wanting those, who attributed to chance the existence of the universe. With this opinion we have, at present, no concern, further, than as it militates with our first proposition, viz. that something existed from eternity. If the universe proceeded from chance, eternal existence cannot, I suppose, be predicated of any being. But if chance produced the universe, why does it produce nothing at present? If it produced the first man, why has it never produced any other? If it produced the first plant or tree, why has there been, since the memory of man, a precise method established, agreeably to which all vegetables have been propagated? If it produced the eye, why has it never produced a telescope; if it has produced the solar system, why not a planetarium; by what, may be exemplified the relation and motion of those bodies which compose it?

But to perceive, more fully, the merit or demerit of this opinion, which ascribes the universe to chance, it is necessary to investigate the term. What is chance? We apply the term not to events which exist without a cause; but to those the causes of which are unknown. When a cube is thrown up into the air, and returns, we say, it is by chance, that one particular side first strikes the ground rather than another. A person interested in a lottery, is said by chance to draw the highest prize. Two travellers taking different roads, are said by chance to arrive at the same place at the same time. But in no one of these cases is there any effect without an adequate cause, nor any uncertainty, but that which arises from human ignorance. Whether this or that side of a cube shall first strike the ground, depends on its position and direction, when its descending motion began. That position and duration depended on the impulse received from the hand, when throwing it up, and the uniformity or diversity of the medium, through which it passed. There is no effect without a cause, in the whole process. Why, then, you will ask, cannot the person, who sent the cube

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into the air, tell, beforehand, the manner in which it will strike the ground. I answer, because of his inability to calculate the combining causes, which produce the effect;—the combined impulses by which its motions are regulated.

Equally mechanical is the drawing of a lottery; and, but for our ignorance of the various causes, concerned in it, the success of every adventurer would be clearly foreseen.

The remaining case is that of two persons, setting out from different places, and going in different routes; yet after having travelled a number of hours, arriving at a destined spot, precisely at the same moment. Such an event we should attribute to chance. Yet the cause is extremely obvious. Only suppose that the routes, though unknown to the travellers, were exactly of the same length; and that they, without being sure of it, proceeded with the same rapidity, and the issue could not have been different. Nor could it have been different, if the pace of the one exceeded that of the other, in proportion as his tour was longer.

It appears then, that when we attribute any event to chance, we mean nothing more, than that the manner of its production is unknown to us;—we are unacquainted with the manner in which it was effected. Now, if they who speak of the universe as having been produced by chance, mean nothing more than this,—if they mean only to say that the universe was created in a manner, which is to them unaccountable, the most devout believer would not, thus far, oppose them; for this is, in no degree, inconsistent with their opinion, who attribute all to a Supreme, Intelligent Being. But if, by chance, the atheist means something else, if he uses the term in a sense different from that in which it is used by others, he is bound to give a precise definition. Until this is done, his doctrine of chance can neither be refuted nor understood, nor does it deserve notice.

It may not be improper, under this head, to mention another opinion, embraced by some who are unwilling to acknowledge the existence of God. They suppose, that all things were produced by the laws of matter.

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Let us not be deceived by words, but inquire into their meaning. 1. A law implies a lawgiver. 2. A law is the prescribed method, in which something is done.

1. A law implies a lawgiver. The laws of a family are enacted by the heads of the family. The laws of a State are enacted either immediately by the collective body of individuals who compose the State, or else by those to whom they have delegated legislative power. The laws of nations are habits established by the consent of nations. If those therefore are laws of matter, it is obviously proper to inquire, who framed them; which question cannot be answered, without the acknowledgment of something prior to these laws.

2. We said, that law is the prescribed method, in which something is done. The laws of a family are the prescribed way, in which its members are required to proceed. The laws of commerce are the prescribed way, in which that branch of business is to be managed. Criminal laws are those, which prohibit certain actions, and point out the manner, in which these criminal actions, when perpetrated, shall be punished. The laws of nature can, therefore, mean nothing more, than the manner, agreeably to which events proceed in the natural world. But surely these laws are perfectly distinct from the cause, from which these events originated. It is not the laws, which produce the effect; but some power acting agreeably to them. It is not the law, which puts the debtor into prison, but the officer acting as the law requires.

Nothing can be more unreasonable, than to attribute to the laws of matter any effect in the natural world, if by that be meant to exclude the agency of an intelligent being. By the laws, the tendencies, the appetences, or affections of matter, we can mean nothing but the manner, in which matter is governed. There can be no creation without change; there can be no change without motion; there can be no motion without a cause; and that cause must exist before the existence of motion. That cause, as self-creation is impossible, must have been eternal.

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Perhaps there is no appearance in the natural world, which a philosopher, desirous of excluding divine agency, would think more favorable to his theory, than that of crystalization. In a fluid, composed of certain ingredients, particles are found to proceed in all directions, to a particular point, and there to unite in perfect order, forming a solid body, with sides and angles well defined. Here, we may be told exultingly, is a specimen of the power of matter; and in some such way was the universe produced. There are, saith the infidel philosopher, certain affections and appetences in matter, by which one part is attracted towards another. In reply, we observe, that these particles in motion are either self-moved, or else moved by some external cause. If by an external cause, that cause must be unoriginated, or subordinate to one which is so. The other opinion, viz. that the particles in motion are not influenced by an external cause, is that only, which we are concerned to refute.

This opinion, that matter has the power of self-motion, is contrary to all experience; and is, in itself, inconceivable. 1. It is contrary to all experience. Who ever saw a rock, or a piece of timber move itself to another place? Who ever saw a tower descend to the ocean, or a ship ascend to the top of a mountain? Yet, if one particle of fluid can move itself from the side of a glass vessel to the centre, it might move itself to one of the stars. If a particle of matter, no larger than the hundredth part of a barley-corn could do this, the same might be done by two particles, or twenty, or by a mass equal to this globe.

But the opinion, that matter has the power of self-motion, is not only contrary to experience, but is inconceivable. Our very idea of motion implies an agent and a patient;—a thing moved, and a cause moving. Those who tell us of a self-moving power in matter, must suppose, either that this power is always exerted, or that it is sometimes exerted, and at other times lies inactive. If it is always exerted, matter must be always in motion, which is contradicted by our senses. If it is

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ever at rest, some cause must begin the motion. In that case there must have been some cause, external in regard to matter, or motion must arise from something internal; i. e. from volition, of which we know matter to be destitute.

When we are told, that particles rush together to form crystals, or vegetables, by a natural appetency, or affection, which these particles have for each other, we may be assured, that the language is wholly without meaning. These words, in common use, mean passion, or desire; but what passion or affection that is, which unites rocks of granite, and quarries of marble, we are yet to learn.

The fact is, when particles of matter combine to form a crystal or a plant, they are not so many independent agents, but are acted upon by some external force, as really, as a wheel is turned by the water, or a vessel impelled by the wind. So when we speak of one body, as attracted by another, we are not to imagine, that the two bodies are agents mutually drawing each other, but that there is some cause, perfectly distinct from these bodies themselves, by which they are pressed together or attracted; and that this attraction, pressure, or impulse is greater or less, in a well known proportion to their distances. But of this we may have occasion to speak in a subsequent lecture.

It is now made evident, we conceive, that some power must have existed from eternity; as that change which is implied in creation, must have been effected by something external, and this external something must itself have been without origin as the effect of something which was so.

It remains next to be proved, that this eternal cause by which the world was produced, is intelligent, which will be attempted in the next lecture, by noticing those marks of design and intention, which are visible in the works of nature. In the meantime, let a portion of your attention be directed to this object. Examine your own bodies, or almost any of those natural objects, which are presented to your view: Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and

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they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach; and the fishes of the sea, and they shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?

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LECTURE II.

THE INTELLIGENCE OF GOD.

In our last lecture, it was proved that something existed from eternity. But whether that which thus existed, is intelligent or not, is a point to be determined by an examination of natural objects. If the effects produced bear no marks of design, we have no evidence of intelligence in the cause, which produced them. On the contrary, if those, which are denominated works of nature, bear the most obvious marks of design, the existence of an unintelligent cause, does, by no means, account for this origin.

Should you witness the building of a machine for the manufacture of cloth, or a mill for the expression of oil from linseed; and should you afterwards, even in a solitary place, find a similar object perfectly finished, and on which no person was at work, you would in both cases, be equally certain of design. You would have no more apprehension, that the latter created itself, or came into existence by chance, than that such was the origin of the former; and further, you would scarcely be more certain of either than you would of his insanity, who should doubt on the subject.

In judging of the divine existence, you are required to observe those rules only, and to proceed in that manner, the rectitude of which in common affairs, is universally acknowledged. If any rational account can be given of the existence of such a world as this, without an eternal, intelligent being, you cannot be required to believe that any such being was concerned in its creation.

We proceed to exhibit evidence.

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1. Can you now describe the organization of one of those plants of which every summer presents a thousand to your eye? You say that moisture is received into the root, and conveyed up into the stalk by means of a large number of fine tubes, and that this moisture, being conveyed in the same manner into all the branches, at length arrives at the leaves, flowers, and seeds. So far is well. These pipes or tubes, it appears, are of great consequence. Almost the whole substance of the plant seems to pass through them. Can you tell, why one substance from the ground enters these tubes, rather than another? You will say, perhaps, that this must be attributed to the form of the aperture in these tubes, by which some particles are admissible, while others are rejected. Can you describe this form? Can you tell the shape of those particles, which are necessary for a particular plant; and why these are necessary rather than another? Can you tell what proportion there ought to be between globes, cubes, etc. to form the rose tree, or the sunflower? If not, you have really less knowledge of these plants, than a child, who sees only the face of a watch, has of the internal structure of such a machine.

Now, if you do not know the constitution of a plant, nor the manner in which it is formed from the earth, though you see hundreds of them every year, how unspeakably far beyond your intellectual powers would it have been to form this constitution originally? For the difference is well known to be immense between the invention of a machine, and the understanding of it, when effectually presented to view. Further, if you who have understanding, and are capable of high intellectual efforts, could not form a plant, could not tell how it should be formed, nor even understand its structure by long acquaintance and by closest attention, how could these same plants proceed from a cause, which had no intelligence? Let us consider more minutely the growth of a plant. How is it first produced? A seed is thrown into the ground. But why should a plant spring from this seed, rather than from a pebble of the same size? Because the seed is so constructed, let us suppose, as to involve

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an extremely small plant. Certain particles are attracted to it from the earth, by means of which particles, its bulk is increased, and an evolution is gradually effected. Is it possible, that the outlines of the plant should all be contained in the seed, by a constitution so minute, as to elude human investigation, and yet this seed not be the production of an intelligent cause? When this seed, being planted, is enlarged and softened by the imbibing of moisture, a sprout, and certain fibres are thrust out from it; one for the stalk, the other for the roots. The sprout cannot be made to grow down, nor the roots to grow up. If an attempt be made, the sprout turns directly round towards the surface; and the fibres, as directly towards the soil. Is there, in all this, nothing of design? Why, if there is no design, should the seed germinate in one direction, rather than in another? And when one course is impeded, why should the same course be resumed as soon as the impediment is removed? What can more clearly evince intelligence and wisdom? Let us further contemplate the most obvious appearances in the process of vegetation. There is the same machinery, we have seen, in each of the branches, as in the stock. By tubes in the principal branches, the fluid, which rises in the stock, is conveyed to their respective ramifications, and thence to the buds, leaves, flowers, and fruit.

The provision which is made for the nourishment of a leaf, is not general, but extremely minute. Every part of the leaf receives due supply. The fluid, conveyed by the stem, has no sooner arrived at that which is properly called the leaf, than several canals of different magnitudes are ready to receive it. The principal of these proceeds directly forward from the stem, dividing the leaf into two equal parts. Into this principal canal various others, somewhat smaller, are inserted, as you will perceive on the slightest examination. The magnitude of these is surprisingly proportionate to the area of leaf to be supplied by them. We can trace the machinery somewhat further. Between these canals, all inferior to that which divides the leaf in the middle, are a multitude of others, still less, which form a

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kind of intervening net-work. It is very material to observe, that these canals answer two important purposes: 1. To convey nourishment to all parts of the leaf; 2. To constitute a kind of frame, by which the whole is rendered firm and consistent.

I would observe further, that there is evidently a regard to beauty in the configuration of leaves. In the shape of different kinds, there is great variety. All are elegant, though not equally so. I know of no one, which is not more beautiful, than if it were a square or a circle. The indentation on the edges is ornamental, obviously designed to be so. Between the two surfaces, there is a striking difference, perfectly corresponding with what we observe in works of human art. Take for instance an elegant table. The upper surface is highly polished. It is evidently designed to strike the eye. The under part is finished in a coarser manner. Still, when you view it, you see more of the work, than when your attention was confined to the polished surface. This is precisely true in regard to the leaf. The under part is not finished, so to speak, with so much care: i. e. it is less beautiful; but the frame, the structure of the leaf is more apparent there, than on the other side.

Now I think it absolutely impossible to mention any marks, which would be sufficient proofs of design, if these appearances do not evince it.

So many proofs of design have we found in the superficial examination only of one leaf. But consider how many hundreds of these are found on every tree! What countless millions are formed and decay every year! All these separately testify the intelligence of their cause. I say separately, because one of these does not merely repeat the testimony given by another, but affords some new evidence to prove the same general truth. For, although there is a general similarity in the frame and constitution of leaves, there is, in many particulars, a diversity, even among all those which are produced by the same tree; and where there are variations in some parts, there are, in others, corresponding variations. Wisdom and design

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are displayed in rendering these variations proportionate to each other. For instance, there are two leaves, let it be supposed, before us. In one, there is a canal for the conveyance of sap very nigh to the hinder edge. In another leaf, the distance between the edge and this canal is twice or three times as great. Now, if too much sap is not conveyed to the smaller portion of leaf, it should seem that the larger portion, having but one canal to supply it, must suffer through want. How is this to be remedied? Carefully examine a leaf, and you will perceive that the conveyance is two or three times as large, in one case, as in the other; and yet, in both, there is an exact correspondence between the means and the end to be answered. Where one varies, the other varies proportionably.

Perhaps there will not be a more convenient opportunity of noticing how small a part of vegetable machinery can be discovered by the naked eye. With a glass, you will see innumerable distinctions and varieties, where, to the naked eye all appeared uniform. You perceive many tubes, fibres, and ramifications, indefinitely small. All these minute parts, let it be observed, are constructed, fitted, and arranged, with as much apparent intention, as those works of nature, which are formed on a more extensive scale. These parts have a mutual relation. They are fitted, one to another. This is peculiarly apparent in certain animal substances. Take from the wings of a certain insect, a segment, less than the diametrical surface of a small pea, the powers of the microscope will, perhaps, extend it over a surface, more than a foot in diameter. A new set of objects is then presented to view; the image is greatly diversified; some parts are opaque, and others transparent; some are partially transparent, and others partially opaque. But, to this transparency and opacity a different organization is necessary. Some portions of this extremely small object are constructed differently from others. It requires attention, then, as certainly to arrange the parts in that portion of an insect's wing, which is no larger than the five hundredth part of an inch, as it does to

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form an horse, or an elephant; though the marks of design are more various and striking, in the latter, than in the former.

The symmetry of animal bodies has been frequently remarked. We shall not go far into the subject. A few remarks will be introduced for the purpose of showing how much of design there is in those minuter objects of nature, which escape common notice.

The joints of animals are so constructed, as best to promote the convenience of those, to whom they belong. Some joints are formed for motion in one direction only; others are formed to move in any direction. In one case, as Mr. Paley has observed, the structure somewhat resembles a hinge; in the other case, a ball and socket. Of the former kind is the knee-joint; of the latter is that joint, by which the thigh of animals is joined to the body. By examining the knee-joint of one of those animals, on which we feed most usually, you will perceive two designs perfectly answered. You will perceive a very strong defence on each side of the joint to prevent dislocation; and every thing prepared for the easiest motion directly backward or forward. Did the ends of the bones play upon each other they would be grated by constant attrition. To prevent this, a smooth, elastic substance is provided, denominated gristle, or cartilage. The bones, covered even with this substance, were it kept dry, would not move with perfect facility. Therefore, a mucilaginous matter is provided, by which the joint is constantly lubricated.

The secretions of animal bodies are equally astonishing and important. Various fluids are to be formed from the blood, not only very different from this, but different from each other. How this separation or secretion is effected, we do not undertake to explain. But certain facts are undeniable. Glands are provided. Into these the blood enters; and from them it is conveyed. While passing through the glands, parts are separated from it, never again to be united. If we are unable to tell how this secretion is produced, it is very certain, that glands are concerned in the process. If so, there must be something in

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the structure of the gland, which fits it for this purpose, and prevents the secreted portion from proceeding with the rest of the blood.

Now, in speaking of these very different parts of the body, joints and glands; and the different purposes, which they answer, we have had in view, animals of such magnitude, that their various parts may be distinctly seen. But the smallest insect is as truly an organized body, as the largest beast, that tramples the forest. If the latter has bones, so has the former, and if they have bones, they have likewise joints. If these small insects have joints, there must be at the end of each bone a particular configuration, else they could not be joined, the one to the other. The same reason, which requires cartilage at the joints in large animals, requires it at the joints of those, which are small. Equally necessary is lubricity in the joints of both. If so, lubricous matter must be prepared. But to the preparing of this, it is further necessary that there be a particular organization.

There are in insects, as in larger animals, different fluids. For the secretion of these, glands are necessary. But a gland is a portion of the body, so peculiarly constructed as to produce a separation between different particles of the same fluid. How extremely minute must be all these parts! Is it possible to conceive of any human discernment and ingenuity so great, as to fix these portions, and to adjust, with perfect accuracy, these objects, one to another? The fact is, that no human intellect can form distinct ideas of objects so minute; and if unable to conceive the plan, how much more obvious is their inability to carry it into execution! Let it not be said, that this is mere theory, and that it is folly to speak of bones, joints, cartilages, and glands belonging to a fly or an ant.

What! Is it a question, whether these creatures possess limbs? Is it not undeniable that some insects of the most inferior kind, have a vigor and elasticity in their limbs, greater beyond all comparison, in proportion to their size, than that of the hare, the fox, or the deer? If these limbs are capable of such im-

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portant uses, they must be so constructed as to qualify them for the purposes they are designed to answer. It is incumbent on the unbeliever to show, that these limbs are not formed with bones, sinews, joints etc., or at least that there is some other way, in which they may be formed, bearing fewer marks of intelligence and design.

But in regard to many insects, limbs, joints, etc. are evident to the naked eye. In regard to the rest, the same is apparent by the assistance of glasses. Even the circulation of the blood is in some, perfectly visible. But the circulation of the blood implies a variety of other objects; and all these objects must be formed after a particular model, and be suited to each other.

I close the lecture with this enquiry: As human beings, confessedly have not a thousandth part of the intelligence, requisite for the structure of a leaf or an insect, have they intelligence enough to determine that the cause, which produced not only leaves and insects, but the heaven and the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars, had no design, had no intelligence?

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LECTURE III.

THE INTELLIGENCE OF GOD.

In exhibiting proofs of intelligence in the great First Cause, our difficulty is not to find objects suited to this purpose, but from a vast variety to select those which are most so.

The formation of the eye has been deservedly reckoned among the most striking displays of the Creator's wisdom. The *general* structure of this organ I shall not describe; but only notice a very few particulars in the eyes of different creatures, by which it will appear, how much the safety and convenience of individuals have been consulted.

At what distance an object may be placed and yet vision be distinct, is well known to depend on the structure of the eye. Some animals see objects distinctly at a small, others, at a greater distance. Birds appear to need the power of distinct vision, both when the object is remote and when it is near. To discern the food, which must, when taken into the beak, be very near the eye, it seems requisite, that the surface of the eye should be extremely globular. But such a configuration would disable them from clearly seeing those distant objects, which it is important for them to discern, when soaring high in the air. The same shape and state of the eye would not accommodate them in both cases. But observe how this convenience has been consulted. They have, as naturalists inform us, the power of altering the shape of the eye. Being furnished with a bony, yet flexible rim or hoop, surrounding the broadest part of the eye, they are able, by pressing this against the eye, to render the external surface more globular, and therefore, better fitted for the discernment of objects that are near. When ob-

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jects far remote are to be viewed, as a less globular surface would be most conducive to this end, the rim or hoop is not applied. But merely the not using of this does not constitute the whole difference, which there is in the eye at different times. A muscle is provided, by which the crystalline lens may, when occasion requires, be drawn further back, in consequence of which very distant objects are distinctly visible.

Now the Creator's wisdom is evident not only in the structure itself, but in disposing its possessor to make a right use of it. The bird must be divinely taught, as it would be beyond all measure absurd, to suppose her in possession of sufficient reason to discern the use from the structure.

In many insects the eye is immovable. This circumstance is, in itself, disadvantageous. But, to compensate for this inconvenience, a larger number of eyes are given; or else the surface is rendered reticular; i. e. it is cut up, so to speak, into a great number of inexpressibly small lenses, standing in different directions, that by *some* of them the rays from every surrounding object may reach the retina. "Other creatures," says an ingenious naturalist,* "are obliged to turn their eyes towards the object. But insects have eyes directed thereto, on whatever side it may appear. They more than realize the wonderful accounts of fabulous history. Poets gave to Argus, an hundred eyes. Insects are furnished with thousands, having the benefit of vision on every side, with the utmost ease and speed; though without any motion of the eye, or flexion of the neck." By which it is meant, that these numerous reticulations on the eye serve as so many distinct organs of sight.

This subject furnishes us with two separate arguments to prove design in the first cause: 1. That a creature should be compensated for the privation of one advantage, by the possession of another, proves design: 2. That in a surface, no larger than an insect's eye, there should be thousands of perfectly regular figures, is such evidence of contrivance and skill, as cannot be contemplated, but with high astonishment.

* Adams on the Microscope, p. 196.

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The *human* eye, and that of most other animals, is so formed as to vary according to the degree of surrounding light. The pupil, or aperture, is involuntarily dilated, when there is a scarcity of light, and is contracted as the light increases. Is not this the effect of an intelligent cause?

We now mention another proof of the same intelligence, of a kind somewhat different. The *Scarabaeus*, or beetle, has large transparent wings of a very delicate texture. This delicacy seems to render it peculiarly necessary, that some defence should be provided. A sheath, or case called by the Greek name *Elytron*, is accordingly provided for each wing. This is of a horny substance. When the wing is not used, it is folded up, and laid under this covering. When the insect has employment for his wings, the covering is removed, and the wings are expanded. (Adams 203, 204. Paley 228.)

While we are mentioning insects to prove the existence of an intelligent Creator, there is one peculiarly adapted to our design. I mean the *ox-fly*. The appearance, which the head of this insect makes, when under the microscope, you may see among the plates, in Adams' treatise on this instrument. 1. There is a tube, contained in a case, by which the blood is to be extracted from the ox, or horse, on which the creature fixes. But before this can be used, an aperture must be made through the skin. For this work he is abundantly furnished; having on each side of this tube an instrument perfectly resembling a surgeon's lancet. When he has, by one or both of these, opened the skin, if an enlargement of the aperture for the admission of the tube, is necessary, he has two other instruments of equal length, indented on the edges, like a saw. By this, he accomplishes what was begun with the lancet. Nothing more prevents him from satisfying his appetite for blood. (Adams, 108.)

As another proof of design, I would direct your attention to the phenomenon of digestion in the stomach, i. e. the solution of food. Digestion, it is now well ascertained, is not produced by the attrition of contiguous parts, but by a fluid, prepared for

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that purpose, denominated the *gastric juice*. Different animals, however, feed on different substances, and that which would dissolve one substance would not dissolve another. It seems necessary, therefore, that there should be a difference in the gastric fluid, with which different animals are furnished. This difference is not imaginary. Its existence is ascertained by experiment. Animals that feed not on vegetables, are not furnished with a fluid, in which these can be dissolved. Those animals, on the other hand, that are supported by vegetables, have not a gastric fluid, which will dissolve flesh. On applying a small quantity of beef to the gastric fluid of a carnivorous bird, it was found that solution immediately began. But says the Abbe Spallanzani, as quoted by Dr. Paley, "the gastric fluid of an owl, falcon, or kite, will not touch, i. e. dissolve grain; no not even to finish the unacerated, or half digested pulse, which is left in the craws of the sparrows, which the bird devours." As the gastric fluid of carnivorous animals will not dissolve grass and other vegetables; so neither will the gastric fluid of those animals, which feed on plants or grain, dissolve animal substances. Another fact is worthy of being noticed in this place. It is derived from the same authority, as the former. "In sheep, the gastric fluid has no effect, in digesting plants, unless they have been previously masticated. It only produces a slight maceration; nearly such as common water would produce, in a degree of heat, somewhat exceeding the medium of temperature of the atmosphere. But, provided the plant has been reduced to pieces by chewing, the gastric fluid then proceeds with it, first by softening its substance; next by destroying its natural consistency; and lastly, by dissolving it so completely, as not even to spare the toughest and most stringy parts, such as the nerves of the leaves."

If then this fluid were exchanged, in the stomachs of two animals, the one carnivorous, and the other granivorous, death would in both cases immediately ensue. Is it by chance, that each animal is furnished with a power, so essential to his existence?

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Again; intelligence in the First Cause is proved by that *natural* affection, which appears in animals, whether rational or irrational. Almost all animals, it is well known, manifest great tenderness and concern for their young. From the parent's great assiduity and labor to supply the wants of its offspring;—from the extreme anxiety manifested by the former when the latter are in danger, one would be led to apprehend, that the imbecility of their offspring was fully known, to the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth. How important is this establishment! Without it, almost the whole animal world would be annihilated. As to the human race, *reason* indeed teaches the dependence and wants of infancy and childhood. But many of these wants would pass unheeded, and the rest be supplied with inexpressibly greater reluctance and labor, were not affection the auxiliary of reason. Among brutes, should this affection cease, nothing would be left to secure attention to the helpless young. It is remarkable, that this affection is not confined to animals of a bland and gentle temperament, such as the sheep or the dove, but is found equally strong in creatures the most ferocious. Nay, the strength of their affection to their young increases with ferocity to other objects. "The lioness is naturally weaker, less bold, and more gentle than the lion. But when she has young, she becomes perfectly rapacious and terrible. She then exhibits more courage than the male. When her whelps are in great danger, she carries them off and conceals them. But when an actual attempt is made to deprive her of them, she becomes perfectly furious, and defends them till she is herself torn in pieces." Whence this union of opposite qualities? Whence this mixture of tenderness and ferocity? The answer is easy. The infinitely wise Creator has seen fit, that this species of animals should exist. As their young have powerful enemies, it is necessary that the spirit and power of their defender should be proportionate.

Further. The divine intelligence is manifested in establishing a connexion between objects, seemingly the most independent and irrelative. What can be more so, than the surround-

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ing atmosphere and any particular passion of the mind, whether joy or grief? Let us see whether there is not, even between these objects, a very certain connexion. My grief, let it be supposed, is excited by the loss of a friend. The news of his death is communicated verbally. But there could be no words without sounds. Therefore, there is a connexion between the surrounding atmosphere, and the existence of a particular passion in my mind, and there could be no sounds without air.

What two objects can be more seemingly independent and irrelative, than the moon's path in the heavens, and the state of a man's health, here on earth? Yet the moon's place in the heavens has acknowledged influence in producing aridity or moisture in the air. This aridity or moisture contributes either to disease or soundness. Therefore, the moon's path in the heavens may affect a man's health on earth.

Again, who would at first imagine, that a leaf of sorrel, or a spear of grass could have any connexion with an object at the distance of ninety-five millions of miles? Yet, if this connexion were dissolved, if this distant object the sun, were annihilated, not only an individual plant, but all vegetation on earth would immediately cease. All objects with which we are acquainted are connected. They sustain a certain relation to each other. The vast machine is beyond description complicated. Any considerable alteration in one part has an effect on the whole. What superlative madness is implied in the supposition, that a system, so vast, so complicated, and so nicely adjusted in all its parts, came into existence without design! This insanity will appear the more obvious, if we consider the astonishing exactness, with which the huge bodies, pertaining to our system, accomplish their revolutions; an exactness which renders their places in the heavens and their relations to each other, capable of being predicted for ages and centuries to come.

These are all the objects, which I shall notice, as proofs of design in the First Cause. It will readily occur to you how few these are in comparison with those which might be adduced for the same purpose. The subject is literally inexhaustible.

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Every object, whether near or distant, proves itself to be the effect of divine intelligence. Were the name Jupiter applied to the true God by heathen poets, we could devoutly adopt their language,

Jovis omnia plena.
Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.

But there is other language still more appropriate: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all! The earth is full of thy riches. So is the great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

I conclude this lecture with a few reflections:

1. Let me advise you to cultivate that state of mind, in which the attention is easily arrested by the objects of nature.

As scholars, you are bound to acquaint yourselves with natural philosophy. The works of God are always before you. You can never, therefore, be at a loss for sensible objects, on which to fix your attention. You will obtain amusement, while you increase in knowledge. But there is a reason of greater urgency. If you exercise your intellectual powers impartially on the works of nature, you will be astonished at evidence, perpetually accumulating, in proof of divine intelligence. You will be hereby reminded of their source, whence yourselves and every other object derived existence. You will perceive, that no condition, in which a creature can place himself, is vacant of the works of God.

2. Attention to the works of nature will enlarge your conceptions of the Universe. If all the ramifications of a leaf were evidently laid out with some design, if the end of every bone in the smallest animals is so formed, as perfectly to correspond with the end of the contiguous bone, it cannot be imagined, that such immense bodies as the fixed stars were formed without design; nor that they should be without other objects, to which they bear relation, the importance of which corresponds with their immense bulk. As bone answers to bone, so, no doubt, does world answer to world, and system to system.

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3. If design is every where discoverable in the works of God, it cannot be supposed, that ourselves form an exception to his general method of proceeding. The truth of this remark, so far as it relates to the structure of the human body, has already been made to appear. As the parts of the body relate to each other, and the body, considered as a whole, relates to the soul or intellectual part, the latter must have a corresponding object. God did not create you merely to exercise his mighty power; but to accomplish some important end in his vast community of beings. You will hardly consider it as questionable, I apprehend, in what way this end is to be promoted. Still, let me ask, has your attention ever been thoroughly engaged on the subject? Have you ever deeply considered that the Maker of heaven and earth created you to subserve his designs of benevolence and wisdom? Have you been able to adopt this conclusion: I am deliberately attached to the interests of virtue, and have enlisted on the side of my Creator? I am sincerely engaged in the work which he assigned me?

4. If the proofs of an intelligent cause are so numerous and undeniable, what reason can be assigned, why any who have competent understanding, deny that there is a God? The wicked hath said in his heart, *No God:* by which is expressed rather his wishes than the conviction of his mind. The divine character, he believes, if there is a God, must be opposite to his own. He chooses rather that there should be no God, than one, who will punish his crimes.

Besides the impious stupidity of endeavoring to believe contrary to evidence, should even that be true, which the atheist desires, he would not be safe. If there were no God, a future state would be neither impossible nor incredible. For if you *now* exist without a Creator, you may so exist eternally. If there is now a connexion between virtue and happiness, and between vice and misery, the same connexion may continue forever. If this world exist without an author, so may a heaven and hell; and the atheist may, by the same accident, which created him, be eternally ruined

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I close with this reflection: If we are the effect of a cause, intelligent and everlasting, we shall have a connexion with that cause during the whole of our existence. On that being will depend, whether we rise from one degree of happiness and glory to another, or sink forever, in degradation and woe.

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LECTURE IV.

THE POWER OF GOD.

It has been already proved, 1. That something must have existed from eternity. 2. That the being, who thus existed, must be intelligent. The latter has been shown by those marks of design, which are so apparent in surrounding objects. The eternal existence of an intelligent being is at least as conceivable as that of a being unintelligent. The former supposition has this advantage over the latter, that it perfectly accounts for all appearances of design; whereas the latter does nothing towards it. In the operations of an intelligent agent, we naturally expect to perceive marks of intention. If this world were the effect of intelligence, those numerous indications of it, which force themselves on our notice, are precisely what we might expect. But if that which existed from eternity, was inert and irrational, all appearances of design—all adaptation of one thing to another, is perfectly unaccountable.

Supposing it to have been sufficiently proved from these considerations, that there is an intelligent Deity, we proceed to make some inquiry, as to his general character. There is little consolation in believing the existence of God, if he is incapable of discerning the true interest of his kingdom; indifferent to this interest, when it is discerned; or too feeble to execute those purposes which his intelligence discerns, and his benevolence chooses.

The attributes of God have generally been divided into natural and moral. By the natural attributes of God, are meant those which do, in no degree, determine his moral character; such as power, intelligence, omnipresence, etc. These, in

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themselves considered, render a being formidable, but not lovely. There may be great strength, and great intellectual powers, when there is a perfect destitution of every quality which demands affection. By the moral attributes of God, are meant those which determine his moral character: such as justice, benevolence, or moral purity.

We begin with the former of these; and first the attribute of power. The intelligent Being, existing from eternity, is all-powerful. By which I mean, that there is no conceivable effort to which his power is inadequate. To prove this, let us consider what evidence of power is exhibited to our sight.

I pass unnoticed the highest and most ponderous mountains: I say nothing of seas and oceans, however vast their breadth and their depth. I direct your attention to the earth itself. This, with all its appendages, came into existence by the volition of the Supreme Cause. But the earth is only a part of our system. There are other bodies in it, whose magnitude is vastly superior. These have the same origin. The exterior planets and the sun himself rose into existence at the command of God. No one is able to contemplate these mighty globes, without connecting with them ideas of astonishing power. These ideas would be unavoidable, even if creation, at first, implied nothing but the giving of form to matter already existing. When a tree, or a plant is now produced, certain particles from the earth and air are differently arranged, placed in a new relation to each other, and thus assume a new appearance. Yet, strictly speaking, there is no new creation; matter only assumes a different form. All the materials were provided before. Now even if matter had been eternal, it would have been an astonishing effort of power, to form it into such immense globes, as those which compose our system. But there was a time, when no materials existed. Deity, therefore, not only gave to matter that particular form, in which it now appears, but he created the matter itself. He caused that to be, which previously had no existence. We can have no conception of any effort of power superior to this.

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But these vast bodies are not at rest. How great the power requisite to set in motion a body the diameter of which is nearly 90,000 miles !* This motion is not only constant, but inconceivably rapid. The Earth proceeds, it is calculated, at the rate of 68,000 miles in an hour. That part of our philosophical apparatus, familiarly called the whirling machine, constructed to exemplify the laws of motion in the heavenly bodies, when moving rapidly, would, it is believed, bring certain death to a person fairly exposed to it. What then must be the momentum of this earth, the diameter of which is nearly 8,000 miles, moving at the rate already mentioned, of 68,000 miles in an hour! How strong must be that arm, which thus impels those planets which pertain to our system !—that power, which prevents these planets from infringing against each other, or proceeding either to the right or left of a prescribed course !

But why, when contemplating the mighty power of God, do we confine ourselves to the solar system? The existence of others is not indeed, strictly speaking, demonstrable. Yet the contrary supposition, viz. that bodies so large, so brilliant, and numerous, as the fixed stars, should have been created for no other purpose than to decorate the sky, and afford a very scanty light to our earth, and her associated planets, implies a proceeding in Deity, so extremely different from other parts of his works, and so seemingly destitute of that consummate wisdom, the marks of which crowd upon our view in every direction, that the existence of other systems, to each of which a star is the luminous centre, scarcely admits a rational doubt.

Suppose, then, that there are in the Universe as many systems, as there are stars, visible either to the naked eye, or by the assistance of glasses; and that the bodies which compose these systems, are as large, as the bodies which revolve around our sun ;—that they proceed in orbits of as great dimensions, and perform their circuits with the same celerity ; what power, what mighty power must he possess, who upholds, moves, and regulates this vast assemblage of worlds and systems.

* Jupiter.

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You are convinced, I suppose, that these objects demonstrate a very great degree of power in the Being, who produced them. Power may be great, however, and yet not be infinite. God may be powerful, and yet not all-powerful.—This suggestion is doubtless worth considering. But before we attempt to remove your objection by proving that God *is* infinite in power, or all-powerful, it is necessary to ascertain the meaning of those terms. Till this is done, it cannot be known whether they are applicable to Deity or not; nor can we ever know, what proofs are necessary to evince the propriety of such application.

Perhaps you would explain your objection in this way. You would say: As Deity has produced very great effects, it is evident, that he has great power. If he had produced still greater effects, more power would have been displayed. If he had produced infinite effects, it would then be evident, that he had infinite power. But as the effects of his power, though great, are finite; we have no evidence of any thing but finite power.

If this objection is solid, it proves not only, that we have no evidence of the infinite power of God; but that it is impossible, we ever should have such evidence. An infinite effect neither exists, nor can exist. It is of the very nature of creatures and effects, to be finite. Infinity is peculiar to Deity. It is an attribute which cannot be communicated. God may create one system, and another, and a third. There is no number, beyond which he cannot go. But if an infinite number could be supposed to exist, the whole of almighty power would be expended; bounds would be set to that which is absolutely boundless.

Further; if the production of infinite effects were, in itself, possible, it could not be to us, the ground of any belief, for this reason, that we could never ascertain the fact. It is possible, that we might be ascertained of the existence of a hundred, a thousand, or a million systems: What then? This is a limited number. Go on to count a million more. Still the number is limited. How evident is the absurdity of attempting to ascertain by mensuration, that a thing has no limits! Let it be sup-

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posed, that there is a line extending a million of miles, and that for aught any one knows to the contrary, it is coextensive with space, or is infinite. How should the matter be determined? How should finite creatures know, whether it were infinite or not? Should they find an end, they would know it to be finite, but if they should not find an end, as they would not, if it were endless, they would never know whether it were finite or infinite. Consequently were an infinite effect necessary to prove infinite power in its cause, it would be absolutely certain, that such power could never be proved to the apprehension of finite creatures, even if these infinite effects really existed.

When we speak of God as omnipotent, or infinite in power, we do not mean, that he can communicate to matter or to creatures his own infinity, which is implied in his creating an infinite number of worlds. But we have defined the term, by saying that "there is no conceivable effect, which exceeds the power of God." If he has created one such system as ours, it cannot be conceived, that he should want the power to create a second, a third, a hundredth, or a thousandth. Fix on any number you please; it is in the power of God to double that number. Double that number, or multiply it, as you will; it is still in the power of God to produce more than are expressed by the product.

Again, God is able to destroy the universe. With perfect facility he could annihilate the earth, and every created object. This is demonstrable. What he created, he continually supports; and if his supporting hand were withdrawn, annihilation would of course ensue.

The proof of power hence arising is indeed not direct. Annihilation of the universe, should it take place to-morrow, would not directly prove the power of God, as it would imply no action in Deity, but rather rest, or withdrawment of action. But though the proof would be indirect, it would be cogent and undeniable. Because, if annihilation would be the consequence of God's withdrawing his sustaining energy, it follows, that the preservation of the universe is the result of that ener-

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gy; and surely that power by which the universe is sustained, must be inexpressibly great.

Further: it proves an agent to be powerful, if he can accomplish the same end, in a great variety of ways. That such power exists in the Deity, is evident from a consideration of objects less magnificent, than those, to which our attention has been directed. One of the designs in view of Deity is the support of animal life. What a vast variety there is in the structure of animal bodies; and yet all answer the purpose of supporting animal life. We see then, the ability of God to produce the same effect, in a great variety of ways. Another design in view of Deity is to support vegetable life; but the bodies of vegetables are not less various than those of animals. Here then is another proof of the power of God to accomplish, by a variety of means, the same general end. Proofs of this nature might easily be multiplied beyond the limits of this discourse.

Possibly there may still be in the minds of some, two considerations, which if they do not militate with the doctrine of divine omnipotence, may at least be thought inconsistent with our definition of it; which definition is, "that there is no conceivable effect, the production of which exceeds the divine power." It may appear to you, that God is not, in this sense, omnipotent, unless he can produce infinite effects; and 2. Unless he can cause a part to be greater than the whole, and cause a thing to be and not to be at the same time.

I answer, that neither of these effects is conceivable. They both imply absurdity. If there could be, at any time, an infinite effect, i. e. an effect, which nothing could exceed, it is evident, that no effects could be added to it; because, if any thing were added, the sum would exceed that which is infinite. But if nothing can be added to those effects already produced, then has Deity nothing to do:—nothing which he can do; and if there is nothing which Deity can do, then hath he no power; which is at once, absurd and impious. But the existence of that which implies an absurdity, cannot be conceived. Therefore the production of any thing infinite is not among conceiva-

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ble effects. It follows then, that infinite power might be measured by a created object: but that which can be measured has limits.

The other suggestion was, that if God be omnipotent, then can he cause a thing to be and not to be, at the same time; or can cause a part to be greater than the whole.

I answer, that this is more obviously inconceivable than the other, and therefore inability to do this is not inconsistent with divine omnipotence. Any thing which implies absurdity is not an object of power. Make an effort to conceive that part should be more than the whole; that a figure should at the same time be a triangle and a square; that a temporary being should be an eternal being; that a thing should exist and not exist at the same time. The very moment you make an effort to conceive any of these things, absurdity appears. You perceive that no power, neither human nor divine, can cause two things to exist, when the existence of the one implies the non-existence of the other; and it is no more derogatory to the powers of Almighty God, to deny the possibility of his causing a part to be equal to the whole, than to deny the possibility that God himself should at the same time both exist and not exist.

Writers on the subject of divine power have usually remarked that omnipotence does not imply the power of doing wrong, and the Scriptures speak of Deity as a God who cannot lie. But this, I conceive, has no relation to power simply considered. The meaning is not, that Deity wants power to pronounce one sentence or another;—that he wants the power to make a declaration which corresponds with truth, or is inconsistent with it, but only that he has no disposition to do the latter. When we say of a parent, that he cannot permit his child to suffer, we say nothing of his physical strength, but of his natural affections. We do not mean that he has less physical power than if he were destitute of parental sensibility.

It has, we conceive, been proved, that God is all-powerful; that there is no conceivable effect, which he is unable to produce. What God has done, he is able to do. He has created

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matter out of nothing, i. e. he has given existence to that which previously had no existence. He has created a vast, but as it respects us, an indefinite number of globes. He has, therefore, power to multiply these effects beyond any conceivable limits. He has a perfect command over all the globes, which he has created, moving and directing them with perfect ease and precision. Of course he could easily move, and precisely direct and restrain any other worlds, which he should be pleased to call into being; though they should be more numerous than particles of sand in the globe, or drops of water in the ocean.

Conformable to these ideas of omnipotence is the general language of Scripture: He shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. He commandeth the sun and it riseth not; he sealeth up the stars. He alone spreadeth out the heavens and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. The Lord of hosts has purposed; and who shall disannul it? His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Again: All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.

I close with one reflection. Whatever part of the Universe we may occupy; in whatever period of a boundless futurity we may live, this Almighty Being will be our friend, or our enemy. His power will be employed in conferring reward, or inflicting punishment. Who then may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand, when he appeareth?

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LECTURE V.

DIVINE OMNISCIENCE.

Our present object is to prove the omniscience of God. This is an attribute, different from that of intellect, or intelligence. The difference is nearly the same, which there is between the capacity of a vessel and its actual fulness. An intelligent being has a capacity for knowledge, and the greater his intelligence the greater is this capacity. Our having proved the intelligence of God does not, therefore, supersede the necessity of proving his omniscience or infinite knowledge.

1. The Divine Being must be conscious of his own intellectual exercises; and have a knowledge of his own attributes. Every man is acquainted with what passes within himself. He is conscious of being averse from some things, and inclined to others. He is conscious of viewing some designs with approbation, and of making efforts to execute those designs. Deity is, in like manner, conscious of being pleased with some objects, and displeased with others. He knows what objects they are, which meet his approbation, and what those are, which excite his disgust.

As man is acquainted with his own physical strength, so must God have a knowledge of that infinite power, which we have shown to be one of his attributes; and he must distinctly perceive the various ways, in which this power may be exerted.

Intelligent and prudent men do not engage in any enterprise without having formed some plan, agreeably to which they may proceed, and to the accomplishment of which all these future efforts may tend. All the actions of God are doubtless in agreement with some design. Of his own designs he must be conscious. He is perfectly acquainted then with the whole

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plan, agreeably to which the universe is governed. Conformably to this Cicero* observes in relation to the gods: Neque ignorant ea, quae ab ipsis constituta et designata sunt. Even this part of the plan, which remains to be executed, is as clearly in the view of God, as that which has been executed already.

Further, God has a knowledge of his own eternity. Human beings have an idea of the duration of their lives. Deity without doubt, has a clear view of his own existence, which is eternal. His conceptions on this subject are vastly different from ours. Our notions of infinity are obviously inadequate. We measure off certain portions of space or time, and say, that infinity extends beyond these. We measure still further, and placing our marks, repeat the same observation, that infinity reaches beyond them, and that no limits, however extensive, can circumscribe it. We may be said to have an idea rather of what infinity is not, than of what it is. But as God must have a knowledge of his own existence, and that existence is eternal, he must have an adequate and full view of eternity.

2. Every artificer has a knowledge of his own work. When he constructs a machine, he knows the different parts, which compose it; and the proportions, which each part must have, that it may produce on other parts the desired effect. But Deity is, so to speak, the artificer of the universe. There never was, and there never can be either any world or any particle of matter which God did not create.

If he is the Creator of every particle of matter in the universe, he knows the rise, the shape, the attraction, and all the properties, which it possesses; and, of course, the effect, which will be produced by any number of them, when combined in any conceivable manner. If Deity were, at this moment, to introduce a new globe into our system, as he is perfectly acquainted with the bodies, now in being, and must be equally acquainted with the properties of the new globe to be added, it is impossible, that he should not have a distinct view of all the alterations which would hence result to our system. When God moistens

* De Divinatione 1. 140.

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the earth in summer with a shower of rain, as he has given to water, air, and earth their appropriate qualities, and knows precisely the quantity of these, which will be brought within the sphere of each other's influence, he must see, without the possibility of error, what combinations will be formed, and what will be the result of those combinations, in the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. In like manner, when a concussion is to be produced in the air, or earth, God having a perfect knowledge of the objects combining, as also of the degree and extent of their influence, must clearly perceive how many objects will feel the concussion, and to what degree each individual of them will be affected by it. When a seed is cast into the earth, as God created it, he knows its structure and properties, and being equally acquainted with the soil, in which it is to vegetate, and the nature of the incumbent atmosphere, he cannot but know what tree will be produced; he cannot but know not only its size, shape, branches and leaves; but the disposition of every particle, and the connexion which each particle has with another. The knowledge which God has of matter, let it be noticed, is very different from our knowledge on that subject. We perceive some of the properties of matter. He knows it thoroughly, being its Creator, and having bestowed upon it all the qualities, which it possesses. We know, that gold is yellow; but we know not what internal constitution is necessary to produce that color. We know, that a body, once yellow, may become green, or even white; but we know not what internal change takes place, producing this different appearance. But to God it must be perfectly evident, what internal arrangement is necessary to one color, and what, to another.

As yet, created agency is left entirely out of view, in the agency, which intelligent creatures may have. While this is done, it will not, I suppose, be seriously questioned by reasonable persons, that all motion in the material world is either directly, or indirectly from God; and of course, that all effects and alterations must proceed from him. For alterations and effects in the material world are invariably the result of motion.

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If all effects, in matter, exclusively of created agency, must proceed from God, he must know what these effects are, and know them as well before they take place, as after.

We will dwell, for a moment, on that knowledge, the existence of which we have already proved. If God is the Creator of matter, and Author of all its properties, then does he distinctly perceive, at every moment, what is the state of our atmosphere;—in what places it is most dense, and in what places most rare; where there is the greatest accumulation, and where the greatest want of the electrical fluid;—what particles of vapor are suspended in the air; at what height they are suspended; what motions they have; and what combinations they form. The whole vegetable world is spread out before him. He sees the process, which is perpetually going on, in all the gardens, fields, forests, or deserts on earth. Amidst all these, not a single branch is broken, not a leaf fades, not a spear of grass either withers or vegetates, but by his agency, and consequently, according to his knowledge.

In regard to the mineral kingdom, his agency and knowledge are equally undeniable. Not a particle of earth is moved without his observation. Whatever substances indurate or soften, unite or separate, combine or dissolve, attract or repel, the whole process is distinctly before him. He sees the crystal form, and the rock dissolve. He sees those arrangements which are made in the bowels of the earth, and are followed by earthquakes and volcanoes.

How vast is the extent of animated nature! How unspeakably numerous are the changes, perpetually effected in animal bodies. Yet from the greatest to the least; from the whale or the elephant, to the smallest reptile or insect, not a bone is broken, a joint dislocated; not a particle of flesh is formed, nor a drop of blood set in motion, without the knowledge and particular attention of the supreme God. Further, show me a drop of water, distilled from the clouds: God has seen where every particle of that drop has been from the first creation; with what bodies its parts have been united, how a separation was

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produced, and by what process it came into its present form and situation. What God knows of one drop of water, he knows of every portion of matter through the universe; and what he knows of the past, he knows with equal certainty of the future!

There are, among those who equally believe in a divine providence, two opinions, of which we ought not to remain ignorant. One is, that at creation, God communicated to matter certain qualities, and that in consequence of these qualities, effects are produced without any further immediate agency from God. One of these qualities is attraction; in consequence of which a stone, when unsupported, falls to the ground; another of these qualities, or affections, they suppose to be such, that when a material body is moving around another, it has two tendencies; one to the centre, and the other from it, and that these two tendencies regulate each other. The other opinion is, that the laws of matter are nothing but the immediate agency of God, exerted after a particular and established manner:—that a stone can no more move itself towards the earth, than from it:—that there can be no power in one body to attract another at a distance; and that centrifugal and centripetal forces are nothing but the direct exertions of divine power.

It is not my present intention to express an opinion as to these theories. The object of these remarks is only to show, that whichever of these theories we adopt, the proofs of divine knowledge will be undeniable. If God had given to matter certain affections or qualities, in consequence of which effects are produced, the nature and power of these qualities must have been perfectly known to him, when first imparted. Consequently, he could not but foresee all the motions, connexions, and relations, that were to result from them. But if the laws of matter are nothing but the immediate operation of God, a knowledge of all effects in the natural world is but a knowledge of his own operations.

3. Deity knows the thoughts and intentions of all rational creatures. Without this knowledge, he could not be qualified

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to govern the universe. Outward actions are nothing in a moral view, any further, than as they indicate the feelings and dispositions of the heart. Now as the same outward actions proceed from very different designs, a being, who judges by them alone, must necessarily make a wrong estimate. If all creatures should be treated according to their external actions, they would not, in a thousand instances, be treated agreeably to their true character.

This does not directly prove, that Deity has knowledge of the hearts of created agents; it only shows the impossibility of his acting in the capacity of moral Governor without it. And from the undeniable intelligence of God, that intelligence, which has been proved to be one of his attributes, it follows, that he would not have created intelligent creatures, without ability to calculate their moral desert.

Besides, as the presence of God must be equally extensive with his power, and his power upholds every created mind, it follows, that he is present with every created mind; and if so, he has the best opportunity to perceive its intellectual and moral exercises. It cannot be rationally imagined, that the intelligent Creator of all things should be ignorant of that which occurs in his immediate presence.

4. The knowledge of God not only extends to all events in the natural world, and to all the present and past exercises of moral agents, but to all those exercises which are future. The works of God, it has been observed, indicate design. The more they are examined, these indications rise in greater number, and are viewed with increasing astonishment. But the material world, though vast and stupendous, is the least considerable part of creation. The intellectual world is more noble, a more striking exhibition of the Creator's perfections. If design is so evident in that which is less noble, we cannot reasonably imagine, that those parts which are more so, should be created without it, nor that any thing should be created without a foresight of events, and circumstances, that would result from its creation. If Deity, previously to creation, has a distinct

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view of the future conduct and pursuits of a being, whose form or idea is already in the divine mind, he can instantly perceive, whether on the whole, it is better to create or not to create. But if he has no knowledge of the future course of the contemplated being, he must be perfectly uncertain whether the creation of such a being would be wise or not. A God of infinite intelligence would not, we believe, have created the universe under such uncertainty.

Were God unacquainted with the future exercises of moral agents, he could not have in his mind, any definite plan of his own future proceedings. Events often happening contrary to the divine expectations, that course of proceeding, which he had contemplated, it would be necessary to relinquish for another. If disasters were unforeseen, measures could not be taken before hand to prevent their ill consequences, nor to educe good from them. Deity would, it should seem, be somewhat in the condition of human agents, and experience something of the embarrassment, to which they are subject. A general of an army supposes that his antagonist will direct his forces to such a particular station. On this supposition he takes measures, either to render that station useless or else to prevent the enemy from occupying it. He then discovers, that his enemy's object was of a different kind, and that his own precautions were to no purpose. Surely, we cannot reconcile it with the majesty and intelligence of God, that his schemes should be not only variable, but actually changing; that he should relinquish a plan of proceeding, because something occurs, which renders the prosecution of it improper. In the clear foresight of every future event and circumstance, he makes such arrangements,—he orders his providence in such a manner, as the case requires. Nothing occurs contrary to his expectation; nothing which he had not from eternity, foreseen.

Here arises a question of difficult solution; a question, which has for many ages exercised the minds of moralists and theologians. How is it possible, that Deity should have a certain foreknowledge of the volitions of free moral agents? On this

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subject two opinions have been maintained. The first is, that God foreknows all events, in the moral, as he does in the natural world, because he is determined to produce them; that matter and mind are equally influenced by his irresistible power;—that as a wheel is said to move, though turned by the water; so the mind is said to choose and to act, though its choice and action are the result of a foreign impulse. This opinion evidently accounts for the divine foreknowledge; but is accompanied with difficulties, for which this advantage poorly compensates.

Those who shrink from these difficulties, freely acknowledge their ignorance on this mysterious subject. They freely acknowledge themselves unable to comprehend any of Jehovah's attributes; but can as well account for his foreknowledge, as for his almighty power, or omnipresence. We can have no adequate ideas of the divine self-existence. If we fix our attention upon it, our thoughts are soon confounded. The eternity of God is equally beyond our comprehension. Notwithstanding this, the existence of both these attributes may be proved. How extremely presumptuous then, is the assertion, that God cannot know future events, unless they are the necessary and infallible result of his own influence, because we may not be able to see how his foreknowledge is obtained! It would be wiser to exclaim: Who can, by searching, find out God? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?

It has been shown, that the knowledge of God extends to all his own perfections and purposes;—to every motion, effect, or alteration in the material world;—to the present and future exercises of free agents. Nothing beyond this can be comprehended in our ideas of omniscience.

I close the lecture with a few practical remarks:

1. How vast must be the mind of that Being, who comprehends, not only the form, relative position, and motions of every particle of matter in the universe; but likewise the inclinations, wishes, intentions, partialities, and aversions of all rational beings, whether men or angels!

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2. We perceive that Deity is perfectly qualified to act, as Judge of the world. He is said in Scripture to be a God, by whom actions are weighed, i. e. he knows precisely their good or ill desert.

3. We perceive, that those ideas of God, which we obtain from reason employed on his works, perfectly coincide with the sentiments which on this subject are conveyed by his word: All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do: even the thoughts and intents of the heart. There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed: neither hid, that shall not be known, and come abroad.

Finally: By contemplating the omniscience of God, we are able to form a correct estimate of that shrewdness and artifice, by which unprincipled men sometimes conceal from the virtuous, their own moral turpitude, and establish among the vicious a high character for penetration and talents.

Show me the person, whether young or old, who has discovered a method of violating the principles of modesty, temperance, sobriety, and good faith, with such profound secrecy or deep dissimulation, as to impose on him, whose law is thus violated, and whose authority is thus contemned, and I will allow him the highest honor, which he claims: viz. that of being a sinner of extraordinary ingenuity and good fortune. But, if by all his care and policy, he effects nothing more, than to conceal his profligate manners from parents, guardians, or the civil authority, while the whole series of his artifice and crimes are thoroughly understood by the august Being, who wants neither the power nor inclination to punish them, he as much deserves to be despised for his idiocy, as to be reprobated for the unmingled depravity of his heart: Wo, therefore, unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord; and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? For thus saith the Almighty, Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the

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bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent and he shall bite them. Though they dig into hell, thence will my hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down.

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LECTURE VI.

DIVINE BENEVOLENCE.

Benevolence in God must be, in kind, the same quality as benevolence in men or angels. If it were otherwise, the same term in application to both would be improper. When it is said of God, that he is benevolent, if the term has not its usual signification, it cannot, without explaining, be known what the speaker designs to assert.

Benevolence, in any being, is good will, or a disposition to promote the happiness of others. The benevolence of God is his inclination to impart happiness to his creatures.

Every good being takes pleasure in the exercise of goodness. A good man is happy in relieving the distresses and augmenting the enjoyments of others. Yet this reverberation of pleasure, so to speak, is not his direct object; that is the interest or relief of another. The object of benevolence is a happiness distinct from its own, and if I take pleasure in another's happiness, it is because I had previously a fondness for it,—a desire that it might be advanced. But if I do good to another, only for the purpose of promoting my own advantage, the action may be prudent, but is surely not benevolent.

As God is independent and almighty, his happiness must be in his own power. He enjoyed the same exalted felicity before creation began, that he now does in contemplating his vast universe. His design in creation must, therefore, have been benevolent;—it must have been to impart happiness.

Dr. Clarke, with the approbation of Abernethy, has made use of the following argument, which he considers, as demonstrating not only the goodness, but all the moral attributes of

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God. The only reason he supposes, why finite beings do wrong, or forbear to act benevolently, is either 1. That through ignorance, they see not what is right and fit to be done: or, 2. Being weak and dependent, they have some present interest in doing wrong. As neither of these causes exists in regard to Deity, it is thought demonstrable, that God will act benevolently. By his perfect intelligence, he understands or perceives, that the communication of happiness is a real good, a valuable object, a thing fit to be done, and as he is almighty and independent, he can have no interest, which should lead him to neglect this valuable object, therefore, he will always to the greatest possible degree pursue and communicate happiness.

If this mode of reasoning is conclusive, it proves, as we have said, not only that the goodness, but that the whole moral character of God is deducible from his natural attributes. This is, indeed, the opinion of those eminent men, whose names we have mentioned. The substance of the argument seems to be this. God will do right, because he can have no temptation to do wrong; whereas, it is conceived, that something more than the absence of temptation to do wrong, is implied in a perfect moral character.

But though this reasoning does not give that entire satisfaction which we desire, it must be confessed that the idea of moral rectitude naturally unites itself to infinite power, independence, and knowledge. Let a person, having arrived at years of discretion, be told, for the first time, that there is a God, eternal, self-existent, infinite in wisdom, and power, he would, it is believed, immediately himself conclude, that this being is perfect in his moral attributes.

Though these considerations are entitled to notice, the proofs of divine benevolence, most to be relied on, are taken from the works of God. Some of these will now be considered.

Many of the appearances which have been mentioned in proof of divine wisdom or intelligence, may, with equal propriety, be adduced in proof of divine goodness. As evidence of such goodness, we first mention the provision, which God has made

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for the support and comfort of brute animals. Though the kinds, and the individuals, belonging to each kind, are innumerable, their hunger is satiated with such food, as their various appetites crave; and this food, which their appetites crave, their internal structure renders them capable of digesting. How long may the forest and the desert be traversed, before one carcase is presented of an animal, having perished with hunger! The ravens and young lions are, indeed, represented in Scripture, as occasionally suffering hunger; but they are said at the same time, to obtain meat from God. Though our present object is to prove the divine benevolence not from Scripture, but from the works of nature, it cannot be improper to convey the idea, just expressed, in the beautiful language of the psalmist: These all wait on thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: Thou openest thy hand, and they are filled with good.

That natural affection, which brutes entertain for their young, is no inconsiderable proof of divine goodness. Without this, not only would the helpless progeny endure much, but nearly the whole animal kingdom would become extinct. Who can observe the extreme anxiety, manifested by the parent bird or beast, when dangers threaten its offspring;—who can observe what labor, privations, and weariness, are cheerfully encountered by animals, whether wild or domestic, for the security and sustenance of the young, without acknowledging the influence of a Being, who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works?

The divine care has been equally exerted in securing the brute creation from the severity of the cold, and from the hostile attacks of other animals. God has not only provided a warm covering for their defence, but taught them, in a variety of ways, to shelter themselves from the storms of winter. Birds of a certain kind he instigates to leave the higher latitudes, as the cold season approaches, and return with the opening year. Others immerse themselves in the soft earth, and remain torpid during the empire of winter. Some animals build for them-

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selves places of residence, and provide stores for their support; others avail themselves of the dens and caverns, which nature has formed in the forests and mountains. Most animals are furnished with weapons of defence, and those which are not, are usually rapid of flight.

Whoever contemplates, with due attention, the animal kingdom, will perceive, that God hath regard to the work of his hands; not only that he hath design in their creation, but designs of goodness. Though they are, by no means, exempt from suffering, there is among them decidedly the general appearance of happiness. To prove the goodness of God, it is not necessary to show, that each creature has a degree of happiness, greater than which, nothing can be conceived; but, that happiness is intended and that more of it is obtained, than misery endured, for that being who has ten degrees of happiness and five of suffering, stands on the same ground, as another, that has no suffering, and but five of enjoyment.

To invalidate the proof of divine goodness, arising from a survey of the animal kingdom, we may be reminded of the devastation, which one tribe of animals makes upon another, and that this seems to take place agreeably to the design of the creator.—We allow the fact in its full extent. We allow not only that one tribe of animals feeds upon another, but that Deity designed, that they should be thus supported. That this, however, proves the want of benevolence in God, we totally deny.

In the first place, I take it for granted, that no one considers the death of animals, in itself, as an argument against the divine goodness. It will not be said, that benevolence requires the Creator to render brutes immortal. If so, it is certain, that those, which die by the violence of their superiors, suffer more than if they died by sickness or age? If not, what argument is hence obtained against the divine benevolence? Is it of any importance to the dead animal, whether his flesh be left to putrify, or be used as food by his survivors? Is it not rather evi-

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dence of goodness in God, that the ruins of one creature should be employed for the support and sustenance of another?

It is further proof of divine goodness, that creatures, capable of happiness, exist in great variety. The sum of human enjoyment is by no means diminished by that very distinct sum, which is imparted to the brutes. The sum of enjoyment allowed to the quadrupeds is not diminished by that which is bestowed on the fowls of the air, the reptiles, or the fishes of the sea. Happiness flows out in a variety of channels, none of which channels are replenished by exhausting another. "This shows," says a judicious writer, "that the benevolent principle is not confined to one method of manifestation, but that the manifestation of it is suited to every exigency of all the objects, which are capable of it. The inexhaustible fountain flows in various streams, satisfying every living thing, with that which is convenient for it. Besides, no one kind could so replenish the earth with inhabitants, the monuments of the Creator's bounty, as now it is replenished; nor could an equal multitude of one kind be so well furnished with the necessaries of life by its productions, as the different kinds are. Men would increase no further than they do, if there were no brutes; nor would they be better accommodated. On the contrary, they would want many advantages for the comfortable enjoyment of life, which they now possess."

That part of the universe, which comes within our view, is full of animal life. The air is peopled with myriads of insects. The ocean teems with the crowds, which inhabit it; and the earth is covered with beasts and with men. All these are calculated to enjoy that kind of life, which the Creator has given them. If, on a leaf, or a flower, there appear, to a critical observer, an indefinite multitude of living creatures, which escape general observation, what millions may we not suppose, there are which, on account of their minuteness, are never discerned!

In the brute creation, there are different degrees of intelligence and sensibility; consequently some are more capable of enjoying happiness, than others. Some discover great quick-

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ness of feeling; others, remarkable apathy. Some are endowed with a degree of intelligence, apparently little inferior to that which is possessed by some of our own species; while others seem but a few removes from inanimate matter. To create the meanest insect, or reptile, and put him into any degree of enjoyment, proves divine benevolence. Now if the existence of the most inconsiderable creatures, accompanied with any degree of unalloyed happiness, is evidence, that God is good; the existence of a creature with capacities for higher enjoyment, is evidence, still greater. Proofs will, therefore, strike our minds more and more forcibly, as we pass on from the lower to the higher order of beings.

From the gradation, which we observe on earth, beginning with inert matter and proceeding to the most intelligent of our species, it would be analogous, that there should be, and reasonable to conclude, that there are, beings in various degrees of superiority to man, it would be reasonable to believe in the existence of superior spirits; such as those, to whom revelation gives the name angels. And, as there is more happiness among men, than brutes, it is analogous, that there should be more happiness among angels, than among men.

Now, if we take into consideration not only the numerous classes of beings, but likewise the immense number of which each class is composed, and reflect, that among all, happiness predominates, the doctrine of divine benevolence will be established by an immense accumulation of proof.

In opposition to the doctrine, which we wish to substantiate, it may be observed, that the world is, by no means, free from misery, and that a portion of this seems to be distributed with no very sparing hand through all parts of creation, which comes within our view. To this I answer,

1. Agreeably to an observation, already made, that in proving the goodness of God, it is not necessary to show that no sufferings exist; it is enough that happiness preponderates. It will not be questioned, I apprehend, that the existence of the various classes of creatures on earth, is better, than none.

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More happiness is enjoyed, than misery endured; therefore, this existence is a favor; therefore, it proves benevolence in the being, from whom it is derived.

2. We are to judge of the character of God, by the general expression of design in his works. Many objects which God has made, do, it is acknowledged, occasionally produce unhappiness to some of his creatures; but is a design to produce misery manifest in the divine works? Houses are made for shelter and convenience; yet they sometimes fall and crush their owners. Food is prepared to nourish and strengthen our bodies; yet it sometimes contributes to disorders, which end in death. The means of education procured by a parent for his child, are intended to enlarge the mind, to increase the future happiness, usefulness, and respectability of the latter; yet these means of instruction may be the occasion of his becoming the more profligate, and the more injurious to society.—Now, let me ask, were houses designed to crush their occupants? Is food intended to bring sickness or death on the recipient? Or does a parent, by educating his children, design to bring on them the greater infamy?

So with regard to the works of God: Persons are sometimes killed by what is denominated "a stroke of the sun." Does it hence follow, that the shining of the sun is no favor, and the proof of no benevolence in God? Showers of rain sometimes injure the health of those exposed to them? Are showers, therefore, no blessing, and the evidence of no goodness in him, who sends them? Is it the great object of rain and sunshine to produce distress and mortality among human beings? We should carefully distinguish between the great and leading object of any plan, and some circumstances, which may occur in the execution of it.

3. As another answer to the objection under consideration, I observe, that much of human misery arises from the imprudence, or the depravity of those, who suffer it. The misery which thus originates, ought, by no means, to be used as an argument against divine goodness. If a man voluntarily leaps from a

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tower, surely it is not required of divine goodness to prevent the contusion of his flesh, nor the fracture of his bones. God is not bound by his benevolence to destroy the connexion, subsisting between sin and suffering. If a man be intemperate, idle, or perfidious, it would be the height of absurdity to charge upon Deity, that ill health, poverty, or low credit, which are the natural result of his own excess, indolence, and perfidy.

We go somewhat further, and say, not only that misery, when the consequence of sin, is consistent with divine benevolence, but *may* be the exercise of it. Punishment, inflicted on the offender, may be designed to promote, either his own good or that of others. It is as much the part of goodness in a parent, to punish a delinquent child under certain circumstances, as to forgive the same child, when circumstances are different. If, all things considered, it is probable, that forbearance to punish, will harden the offender, or embolden others to offend, benevolence requires that punishment be inflicted. Under pretence of compassion, a magistrate might suffer a criminal to enjoy impunity. But who does not see, that compassion to the culprit, would be cruelty to the community at large, whose morals, property, or lives might be destroyed by his crimes?

It might, I conceive, without revelation, be inferred from the goodness of God, that there would be suffering among his creatures, so long as there should be sin; and that if sinning beings should be eternal, so would be their punishment.

We shall now notice a further objection. You will grant, perhaps, that there is, among the creatures of God, a preponderance of happiness, and that the existence of each creature is, on the whole, better than none. But why, you ask, as God is infinite in power, does he diffuse happiness so parsimoniously? To ascertain the merits of this objection, we will consider it, as illustrated in the condition of an insect. The happiness of such a creature, though of some real value, cannot, we suppose, be great, as no doubt, it is alloyed with some inconveniences and sufferings. Why, you ask, should not a creature, whose capacities for happiness are so small, be allowed to have these

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capacities filled? We will suppose them filled. Is the objection removed? No; The question would then be, why are these capacities so small? Why, instead of having the nature and capacities of an insect, has he not the nature of a quadruped, that he may enjoy that degree of happiness, which falls to the portion of the latter? We will suppose him transformed into a quadruped, and as happy, as his nature will admit. Is the objection removed? No. You then ask, why, seeing his Creator is almighty, he did not bestow upon this quadruped, a more noble nature, that he might enjoy the happiness of a human being? Let the transformation be likewise supposed to have taken place. Is the objection removed? By no means. Whatever force, it possessed originally, it still retains. You may as well ask, why men have not the nature of angels, as why brutes have not the nature of men. And as it may be fairly presumed that no angel is so great, that almighty power could not form a greater, you may still ask, why the scale of created existence rises no higher. And if we can have no evidence of the goodness of God, till we can prove, that his almighty power has been exerted to the utmost, it is very certain that such evidence will never be obtained.—I prove this assertion in two ways:

1. The greatest possible effort of infinite power is a solecism in language. Infinite power is power without limits; but every effect is, and must be finite. It is absurd to speak of an effect, equal to infinite power; and it is impossible to imagine any effect, so great, that God cannot produce a greater. For, if all the creatures, now existing, were elevated to the nature and dignity of angels, still, as there is no *ne plus ultra* of almighty power, they might be raised still higher. Besides, their number might be increased. But number implies limits, let it be doubled, trebled, or multiplied by a million, still the product has limits; and a limited effect bears no proportion to an unlimited cause. All objections to the goodness of God, on account of his not having produced happiness to the utmost of his power, do therefore rest on absurdity.

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But 2. Suppose it were otherwise, and that the greatest possible effort of infinite power did not imply a contradiction, it would still be perfectly beyond such limited capacities, as ours, to ascertain, whether Deity had proceeded to the utmost extent of such power, in the production of happiness. Consequently, if the objection were well founded, it would be impossible for Deity himself, to enable human creatures to ascertain his goodness.

Having considered several objections, we observe, that the proofs of divine benevolence, arising from human happiness, will appear to be much increased, when we consider the character of human beings. Even were we in a state of moral rectitude, any excess of human happiness would evince goodness in our Creator. But that we are not in this state, is perfectly plain, even without recurring to revealed religion. Our enjoyments, numerous and various as they are, must not be considered as expressions of divine complacency, in creatures, upright and unoffending. They are favors, conferred on beings, in whom the eyes of God discern daily proof of sluggishness, ingratitude, and perfidy.*

* Note by the Author in pencil. "More ought to have been said in this Lecture of the condition of man as proving Divine Goodness."

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LECTURE VII.

DIVINE BENEVOLENCE.

In the last lecture, I endeavored to prove the benevolence of God. In the present, I shall notice some questions, which present themselves, in view of this subject.

It is natural to inquire, whether the actions of Deity are, in any measure influenced by other considerations, than the promotion of happiness; in other words, whether any measure tending to the general good, would, for that reason, and at all events, be adopted by the Almighty. The decision of this question is the more necessary, as metaphysicians sometimes attribute to the Divine Being measures, the correctness of which can be defended only on the ground of general utility.

If the creations of Deity are not in any measure influenced by any other considerations, than the promotion of happiness, it would follow, that individuals could never have reason to feel secure; because should circumstances be such, that their misery would produce greater happiness to others, misery would be inflicted on them. If happiness would, on the whole, result to the universe, from the eternal sufferings of an innocent creature, he would agreeably to this supposition, be an eternal sufferer; and no creature, in the universe, could be secure from wretchedness, any further, than he could be assured that his sufferings would not, in a general view, be useful; because, if the promotion of happiness be exclusively the object of Deity, and he is in no measure influenced by other considerations, what is usually called justice, or regard to individual happiness, could throw no obstacles in the way of any plan, which might be contemplated.

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Further; If the actions of Deity are influenced in no degree, by other considerations, than the promotion of general happiness, dreadful to contemplate, implicit reliance could no longer be placed on the divine veracity! Why? Because, should such circumstances occur, as that dereliction of truth, on the part of God, would conduce to the general interest of his creatures, or the universe at large, such dereliction would, agreeably to the supposition, occur.

Should it be said, that to render the innocent miserable, or to violate truth would not be consistent with the divine character; I answer, that this is, indeed, true; but were the actions of God influenced by no other consideration, than the promotion of happiness, to be thus influenced would be his character; and, of course, whatever tends to such promotion of happiness, would for that reason, be consistent with his character.

It may here be said, that to make innocent creatures miserable, or to make a declaration, contrary to truth, would not be conducive to the general good.—I answer, that this is only an opinion as to matter of fact; it leaves the principle untouched. While it denies, that the punishment of innocence, or the dereliction of truth can be conducive to general felicity, it implicitly allows, that if they could be thus conducive, they are measures, which ought to be adopted.

The fact is, that these measures, even could such a concurrence of circumstances be supposed, as would render them conducive to the highest good of the whole, would be essentially wrong. There is such a moral quality, as justice, which regards individuals, and secures them from suffering, while innocent; and saves them, even when guilty, from a punishment, disproportionate to their crimes. There is such a virtue, as veracity, or a disposition to speak truth, from the obligations of which, no being can be set free by any prospect of advantage either to himself or others.

The perfection of a character consists not in a disposition to promote happiness at all events; but, to do this in a way of truth, and uprightness.

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We before proved the benevolence of the Divine Being, and we know, that this quality must be of the same nature, wherever it is found. But real benevolence never exists in human beings, disconnected with veracity and justice. We never find a man deliberately and heartily engaged in doing good, who has not, at the same time, a scrupulous regard to truth and individual rights. We find no person of real benevolence, who receives this doctrine, that "the end justifies the means." Justice and veracity always accompany benevolence, so far as we have opportunity of observing. For a person to make it his leading aim to promote happiness, and yet be indifferent to the manner in which this object is accomplished, would be a striking incongruity,—such, we believe, as was never yet witnessed. We therefore conclude, that real benevolence is never separated from truth and justice; but that, as God is benevolent, so are justice and truth the foundation of his throne;—that he not only has those ends in view, which are highly fit, honorable, and glorious, but prosecutes these ends, by means, which are in themselves fair and upright. Agreeably to this the Scriptures represent it, as a suitable ascription to God: just and true are thy ways, O thou king of saints. Far be it from God to do iniquity, and from the Almighty to prevent judgment. To make the righteous as the wicked, that be far from thee, Lord.

Perhaps there will be no occasion, more suitable than the present, for the mention of a doctrine which has excited much attention among metaphysicians and divines; I mean the doctrine of *optimism;* in other words, that Deity has, in the universe, adopted a plan, the best possible,—more than all others conducive to happiness. This doctrine, from the respectable character of its advocates, from the apparent force of some arguments, which they use in its support, and from the bearing it is supposed to have on religion, claims attentive investigation.

I will briefly lay before you the principal arguments, used by the advocates of this doctrine, and will then state the reasons, why some other persons have doubts as to the doctrines, and

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discard the expression, *best possible plan*, as unsuitable in regard to Deity.

The argument in favor of the doctrine of optimism is concisely this. "God is infinitely wise, and therefore sees in what way the greatest possible happiness may be produced; he is infinitely benevolent; and will, therefore, infallibly choose that plan which secures such happiness, which plan by his infinite power, he is able to execute. It would be derogatory to the character of God, say they, not to take such measures, as will issue in the greatest possible sum of happiness." Certainly, it is not to be denied, that the argument has at least the appearance of being solid and irrefragable.

I now proceed to mention the objections, raised against it by those who believe that the expression, *best possible*, is inapplicable to a being of infinite power.

1. They say, it can never be proved, that two plans might not exist in the divine mind, equally good. The thing is surely not self-evident; and all arguments used to prove it are wholly inadequate to the purpose. They do not take upon them to assert, that any two plans are in fact equally good; but are confident, that the contrary is neither self-evident nor capable of proof, and therefore is not to be used as a postulatum. Now, if two plans equally good, and better than all others, might have been in the view of the Divine Creator, one of them must be taken, or another less conducive to happiness, or none at all. If one of two equally good is adopted, such a plan most evidently cannot be said to be the best; but only superior to none.

Should the adoption of one, while there was another in view equally eligible, be thought impossible, as it is by many, and by all who advocate the doctrine now contemplated, it will follow, that a scheme less eligible than those must be adopted, or none. Should a scheme be adopted, less eligible than these, which are supposed to be equal, the doctrine of the *best possible* is abandoned.

The third supposition must be, that under these circumstances, nothing would be done; no plan would be adopted. As,

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to adopt one of two, equally good, would be impossible; so to use a third, when there were two better, would be dishonorable to God.

Those who scruple to use the term, *best possible*, in relation to the Deity, are here ready to reply, that if the adoption of one plan is in fact impossible, when there is another equally good, not to do this can in no degree be dishonorable to God, since it derogates nothing from his character, not to effect impossibilities. No conceivable reason therefore can be assigned, why the third scheme, productive of much good, but of less, by the supposition, than either of the two former, should not be chosen.

To make the matter more plain, we state the following case. Either of the two former plans would produce one hundred degrees of happiness. The third plan would produce ninety-nine degrees. As neither of the two former is supposed to be eligible, on account of their perfect similarity, what should prevent the adoption of the last? The production of ninety-nine degrees of happiness is undeniably better, than the production of none, and would be highly acceptable to a benevolent mind.

This reasoning goes only to show, that the doctrine of *optimism* cannot be proved. But the impugners of the doctrine do not think themselves bound to stop here, having, as they suppose, other arguments, the influence of which is still more extensive.

1. Space is infinite; but to the created universe there are bounds. Beyond the boundaries of the universe, therefore, there must be infinite space. If the plan, which is now called universal, contributes to good, would not another such plan produce a double quantity of good? As space and the power of God are both infinite, it is perfectly conceivable, that another plan like the present might have been set in operation at the same time.

2. Creation is not eternal. There must have been time before God began to create. That time was long; it was indefinite; it was as truly eternal, as the duration yet to come.

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Here appears to have been an opportunity of producing happiness, where none was in fact produced; yet this does not, as was proved in the last lecture, militate with the divine benevolence; which proof is equally acknowledged by those who embrace, and by those who doubt the doctrine in question. It is agreed by both, that God's not having begun creation before, is no proof against his perfect goodness. Now, if it were not inconsistent with divine goodness not to produce happiness during that indefinite duration, which expired, so to speak, before creation began, we cannot be sure, that the adoption of a good plan, though not productive of the greatest conceivable good, would be inconsistent with the same divine benevolence. If Deity existed from eternity, before he began to communicate happiness, why may he not in future exist eternally, without producing the greatest possible degree of it?

Should it be said, that to have begun creation before, would have been inconsistent with happiness; it might be replied, on the other hand, that such a thing cannot be conceived. When no being but Deity existed, there could be nothing external to render one time fit, rather than another; and to suppose any change in Deity would be inconsistent with his immutable perfections. Why do men speak of one time as being fit, and of another as unfit? Plainly, because there is not the same state of things at one time which there is at another. Circumstances alter. But before creation, there were no circumstances, as these always relate to objects. Nothing has neither qualities nor relations. It would seem therefore, that when the phrase *best time*, or the *fittest time*, is used in regard to the commencement of creation, it is perfectly unmeaning.

If those who use the term mean any thing, when they speak of the best possible plan, they must mean a plan, which, on the whole, produces the greatest possible sum of happiness. But if the present system tends to happiness, another of equal dimensions would tend to produce a double quantity. Further, If happiness has resulted from creation for six thousand years; still greater happiness would have been enjoyed at this moment

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if the age of the world, were twice as great; i. e. if creation had begun 6,000 years before it actually did begin.

If we suppose a thousand worlds instead of one, or if we suppose the world to have existed a million years, instead of six thousand, the difficulty will remain,—the greatest possible number of happy beings is not created; of course, the greatest possible sum of happiness does not exist, because, however great the number of happy beings, Deity could create more. Should the argument in favor of optimism be repeated, viz. that as God is infinitely benevolent, if he could produce more happiness, he certainly would do it, it might be replied, that the seeming force of this argument arises from our not considering the difference between a finite and infinite being; and from not noticing that effects, which must of necessity be finite, can never be equal to a cause, which is infinite; and further, that to speak of any conceivable effect, which has existed, does now, or ever will exist, as equalling the powers of Him who is unlimited and infinite, is either without meaning, or untrue.

This is a brief statement of the leading arguments used by those, who contend on this abstruse and difficult point. They who desire to see the subject treated at large, and with great ability, may be gratified by perusing the papers, which in the former part of the last century, passed between Dr. Samuel Clarke and the celebrated German philosopher Leibnitz; whose controversy relates to this subject among several others.—The question, I repeat it, is not whether our Creator is benevolent; for that is equally conceded on both sides; but whether this benevolence requires the greatest possible effort of his power, and whether the *best possible* is a suitable phrase in reference to power, that is confessed to be infinite.

I shall close this lecture with a few remarks, intended to prove the divine immutability. This results from the knowledge, power, and goodness of God.

The changes which occur in human conduct are the result of human imperfection. A perfect being cannot change for the better, and will not change for the worse. Why does a man

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alter his purpose? Perhaps he did not sufficiently consider all, which would be necessary to its execution;—he did not consider all the bearings and relations which might have been foreseen; or perhaps circumstances arise in the execution of a plan, which at the commencement of it could not have been foreseen.

In regard to Deity, none of these things can be rationally supposed. Those effects, which occur in the natural world, are the result of his agency. A knowledge of them is therefore implied in the knowledge of his own will or determinations. His knowledge of the future volitions of moral agents is equally certain. Nothing therefore can arise in the execution of a scheme, which was not foreseen at the commencement of it. The same good reasons, which led to its adoption, must lead to its execution. All its bearings, all its relations must be distinctly in the view of God. He always accomplishes precisely as much as he expected to accomplish. He is therefore never disappointed. Consequently, when men speak of the Deity, as expecting from his creatures any thing different from what they perform, they must be understood to mean nothing more, than that he requires it. He requires service from every rational creature, he has a right to require it, and, with perfect justice, punishes the delinquent; yet is there no act either of rebellion or obedience, which he had not, from eternity, foreseen.

It is sometimes suggested that the divine immutability renders prayer either useless, or improper. If the argument has any weight in regard to prayer, it will prove the inutility of means in general. For, if it be said, that our prayers cannot change an immutable God; it may be added, neither can our industry or application change an immutable God. There may be, notwithstanding the divine immutability, as sure a connexion between prayer and the obtainment of the favors sought, as between agricultural labor and the full grown harvest. The fact is, that in determining any event, all circumstances relating

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to it are taken into view, and have their just influence on the result. Nor is their influence less, because they are foreseen and weighed beforehand, than if they were appreciated for the first time, when the events themselves occur.

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LECTURE VIII.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

The subject of the present lecture is a divine providence;—a government or superintendence of the world maintained by Deity. I shall proceed in the following order:

1. Consider, whether the Supreme Being does at all interest himself in the condition of his creatures;

2. Shall inquire, whether if he maintains any government, it is general or particular; whether it relates to all occurrences, or to some great events only;

3. Whether the changes occurring in the material universe result from properties, which were originally communicated to matter; or are produced by the immediate agency of God.

4. Whether a divine providence extends to the moral world.

1. We are to inquire whether the Supreme Being does at all concern himself in the condition of his creatures.

On this subject there has been in all ages a general, though not universal agreement. Though men have entertained various and discordant opinions as to the number and character of superior Beings; some supposing, that there are many gods, and others believing in one only; some attributing to the object of their worship every moral perfection, and others, a character not superior to their own; in these there has been very extensive union, viz. that the affairs of the world, and of men, are objects of divine attention and government.

As wisdom and design are manifest in the works of God, he must have had some purpose to be accomplished by creation. If so, he cannot be indifferent, whether this purpose is answered

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or not. It would be absurd, for an artificer to construct a machine for a particular purpose, and thenceforward be indifferent, whether it operated at all, or whether its operations produced the effect designed. The philosophy of Epicurus, if it has been rightly understood, represented the superintendence of human affairs as inconsistent with the majesty and bliss of the gods. This opinion Horace avows, as his own, and congratulates himself not a little, in being free from the vulgar belief, that divine interpositions were frequent in human concerns.*

——— Deos didici securum agere aevum;
Nec, si quid miri faciat natura, Deos id
Tristes exalto coeli demittere tecto. (Sat. Lib. 1. 5. 101.)

Some persons of our own time would be thought to do honor to the Deity, and, at the same time, to their own intellectual penetration, by saying, that to suppose the great God concerned in superintending objects so inconsiderable as human beings and human events would be highly derogatory to his infinite majesty. It would be pertinent to ask these people for what purpose the world was made, if it were not worth the governing. God did not leave the smallest objects, which we behold, to create themselves. There is nothing of chance in the structure of a leaf or a flower. Every portion of these is impressed with marks of eternal wisdom. Is it less consistent with the majesty of God to preserve and govern, than to create? Is it, indeed, honorable to God, to say of him, that he has brought into existence creatures, whose preservation would derogate from his character? As to the *securum aevum*, the tranquil life, which the poet had learned to ascribe to the gods, if creation did not disturb it; neither would a perpetual providence.

But is it, in fact, true, that indolence is more consistent with majesty than action? Of those men, who have been deservedly held in high estimation, do you find any, whose days were consumed in sloth? Or who thought themselves degraded by efforts to advance the welfare of others? Would it be evidence

* Plutarch as quoted by Dr. Leland, was of the same opinion. Lel. 1. 392.

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of real worth or greatness, were a man or an angel to seclude himself from the other immense portions of the created universe? Yet this would, at least, be as honorable to human beings, as to the Creator? If the happiness of others deserves the attention of a man or an angel, it is because such happiness is, in itself, a real good. If it is really good and valuable, Deity well knows it; for his knowledge is intuitive and infallible. And would it be honoring the Most High, to say of him, that he is indifferent to that, which he knows to be good and valuable? Even if the world and its inhabitants came into existence without the agency of God, it would appear extremely becoming his moral character to pay some attention to creatures, so numerous, and so susceptible of pleasure and pain;—creatures, on whose condition he might have so great and favorable an influence. There is in fact no system of theism to which the denial of divine providence can be reconciled! If there is a God, as has been proved, there must be a providence. That Being, by whom the world was created, must feel an interest in its condition, and if he is immutably wise and good, such must be his government. This manner of reasoning did not escape the ancients. They therefore considered the doctrine of divine providence, as obviously resulting from that of a Supreme, Intelligent Being.

Accordingly Cicero, in his treatise de Natura Deorum, represents Balbus speaking of the existence of gods, as that, quo concesso, confitendum est, eorum consilio mundum administrari. (Lib. 11. 30 Bipont.)

2. In the next place, we are to consider, whether the government of God is general or particular; whether it relates to *all* occurrences, or to great events only.

On this subject, even those ancient philosophers, who were most decided as to the general doctrine of providence, were not agreed. A particular providence was firmly believed, and ably defended by the Stoics; but all even among them did not believe it in the same sense. The Stoical belief on this subject is expressed by *Balbus*, in the following words: Dico

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igitur providentiâ deorum mundum, et omnes mundi partes, et initio constitutus esse, et omni tempore administrari.* This is, indeed, strong language. But by what follows in the same work, the author has prevented us from understanding it in the most comprehensive sense. He tells us, that the gods take care of great matters and neglect the small: Magna Dii curant, parva negligunt. (11. 66.) Nor does he suppose, that this providence extends to the circumstances and possessions of ordinary men.

Some of the Stoics were much more consistent in their views of divine government. *Epictetus*, in his *Enchiridion*, expresses himself on this subject, with a clearness, which if we except his error as to a plurality of gods, would not be dishonorable to the most enlightened Christian theologist. "Take notice," says he, "that the principal, and most important duty in religion, is to possess your mind with just and becoming notions of the gods; to believe that there are such supreme beings, and that they govern and dispose all the affairs of the world, with a just and good providence."† Indeed this whole work of Epictetus recognizes, in the most express terms, a particular providence.

There is a beautiful passage quoted by Dr. Leland, from the works of Marcus Antoninus; clearly proving what were the sentiments of that philosopher. "If there are no gods," saith he, "or if they have no regard to human affairs, why should I desire to live in a world, without gods, and without a providence? But gods undoubtedly there are, and they regard human affairs."‡

We are apt to make a wrong estimate of events, forming our judgment from present appearances, rather than from consequences and connexions.—To produce an earthquake, or to preside over those great changes, which are occasionally effected in kingdoms and empires, is supposed well enough to comport with the greatness of the Supreme Being. But that a

* De Nat. Deorum 2. 30.

† Epictetus Enchiridion, § 41. Glasgow, 1751.

‡ Leland 1. 338, 390. London, 1764.

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private family, or an obscure individual should be perpetually an object of divine attention, is thought by some to be far less credible. Such an opinion can seem reasonable to those only, who contemplate events, as insulated, forgetting the connexions which one thing has with another. Many of those great commotions in the natural and political world, which excite general notice and astonishment, would not have existed, had some of these circumstances been wanting, which this opinion supposes to be too inconsiderable for the divine notice. Whether an insect shall deposit her eggs in the bark of a young oak, or in some other place, would seem to be an incident, as unworthy the providence of God, as any conceivable. This deposite, however, after a few months, becomes a worm, which corrodes the tree. This tree, when many years have brought it to maturity, the defect not having been noticed and duly estimated, is used, as part of the timber of a large vessel. In this vessel, let it be supposed, are sent despatches, which if duly received, would prevent a national war, affecting the fortunes, lives, and morals of thousands. While employed in this service, the defective timber gives way; the leak is not discovered, till it is too late to prevent the loss either of vessel or crew. An event, comprehending not only this loss, but a national war, perhaps a national revolution, may therefore depend on a circumstance the most casual and trifling. It follows, then, that if Deity exercised a providence over this great event, he could not have been wholly inattentive to those smaller circumstances, which were connected with it.

When the Jews were under the Persian government, a plan was concerted to extirpate the whole nation. This design was conceived by a courtier, high in the royal favor. An edict was actually procured from the king to destroy all the Jews in Persia, and a day was fixed, on which this decree was to be executed. Yet the Jews were not destroyed. They even triumphed over their enemies. How was this issue effected? Mordecai was to be the chief instrument. But he was in disgrace, and a gallows had been built for his execution. This

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Mordecai had, however, some years before, detected a conspiracy against the king's life, which service was recorded in the public records. The matter was forgotten; and had it remained so, Mordecai's death, and that of all the Jews in Persia must have been the result. The event was brought to the king's mind in the following manner. He did not rest well on a particular night; and from a thousand expedients to beguile the sleepless hours, he chose the very singular one of having the public chronicles read in his presence. They were opened at that very place, where this service of Mordecai was recorded. The event was, that Mordecai was immediately rewarded for his fidelity, and raised to a degree of influence, which protected his nation.

The preservation of the Jews was an event of undeniable magnitude. But this event was connected with the king's vigilancy on a certain night, the seemingly odd fancy in the choice of his amusement, and the particular volume and section which were opened by the person in waiting. Had the king slept, as usual, or had he chosen to divert his mind in a different manner, or had the contents of a different leaf been read, the whole realm of Persia would probably have been stained by the blood of the Hebrews. Now, if the preservation of a numerous people was worthy the care of God, it was worth his care to determine the means, by which it should be effected.

To mention instances of more recent date: When a plan was matured for the delivery of West Point to the British army, in the revolutionary war, the design, for aught that appears, might have been executed, if Major Andre had answered, with a moderate degree of self-possession, the first interrogation, that was made to him, by his captors. Had he exhibited his passport, instead of asking an improper question, the independence of our country might not, till this day, have been effected. What vastly important consequences were connected with a momentary perturbation!

In Paris, some years since, an attempt was made to take the life of the emperor of France by what has been called "the

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infernal machine." It was undistinguished in the street, through which he was to pass in going to the theatre. It happened, that in passing the spot, his charioteer drove with a very unguarded impetuosity, so that when the explosion took place, the chariot was at such a distance, as to receive no injury; though, in the street itself, lives were lost and contiguous buildings were shattered and thrown down.—Thus, by the temerity of a servant, was preserved the life of a man, from whose consuming influence scarcely a corner of this wide world was exempt.*

In the natural world, there is no less connexion between small and great events. An earthquake, which shakes a whole kingdom, may for aught we know, result from the collision of two minute particles of matter. Such a train may exist, as that when these shall concur, a violent and extensive commotion shall be effected in the bowels of the earth.

It is evident then, that many events, which we consider as trifling, are not so, if viewed in their connexions; and if great events are under the care of divine providence, small ones cannot be disregarded. Numbers consist of units; nations of individuals. Nations therefore cannot be regarded, if individuals are wholly neglected. Thus a particular is included in a general providence. The doctrine of our Saviour is therefore consistent with the best philosophy: Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing; yet not one of them is forgotten before God; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

3. We are, in the third place, to consider whether the changes occurring in the material universe result from the properties, which were originally communicated to matter, or are produced by the immediate agency of God.

One of the most important laws in the natural world, is that of attraction. Now, it is inquired, whether Deity has communicated to bodies a quality by which they attract each other;

* This story was afterwards confirmed by Bonaparte in a conversation with Dr. Warden, with the additional circumstances, that the chariot wheel struck the machine "and overturned it with great violence."

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or whether their tendency to each other is nothing but the impulse of God.

It is commonly received, as an axiom in philosophy, that nothing can act, where it is not. How then can the sun act upon this earth, or this earth upon the moon? How can distant bodies act upon each other? It will, perhaps, be replied, that some very subtle fluid may exist, as a kind of connecting band between these distant bodies. True it is, that such a fluid may, for aught we know, exist; but it is no less true, that the existence of such a fluid would not remove the difficulty. This fluid must be matter, or spirit, or nothing. If it is matter, it consists of parts; and between these parts there must be some vacancy. If there is a vacancy, and yet one particle attracts another, that particle acts, where it is not; it acts upon another at a distance from it. But this distance, you say, may be extremely small. I grant it; but it is as much impossible, that one particle should act on another, at the distance of an eighth part of an inch, as that one globe should attract another, at the distance of a thousand, or a million miles.

We will now proceed on the supposition, that all distance is annihilated between the parts of this connecting matter. In that case, the supposed fluid becomes a solid, absolutely incompressible. Parts, which strictly speaking, touch each other, cannot possibly be brought nigher. But if a quantity of absolutely solid matter is placed between two bodies, it must effectually prevent those bodies from approaching. Consequently, were such a solid body between the earth and the sun, or between the sun and the moon, it would, to omit other objections, prevent any variation in the distances of those bodies, contrary to known fact.

Suppose then, that the connecting band between different material bodies, is spirit. This will indeed alter the case essentially. But, according to this supposition, you immediately perceive, that the bodies *themselves* do not attract, but are drawn together by this intervening spirit.

The fact is, I conceive, that no consistent theory can be

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adopted on this subject, which does not involve a direct, spiritual agency. The immediate influence of God is exerted, inclining one body towards another. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to observe, that if what is termed attraction between the large bodies of our system be nothing but the direct agency of the Deity, the tendency, which smaller bodies have to the centre is not less the effect of divine power.

It is this power, which returns to the earth a stone or ball, thrown into the air. It is this power, which gives hardness and consistency to bodies, in consequence of which, it is so difficult to separate their parts. Cohesion is therefore, not the action of one particle on another; but the action of Deity on both.

The same general remarks apply to the expansion of bodies by heat. If caloric is in fact any thing positive, it would seem to be a very subtle fluid, repulsive in itself, and repulsive to other bodies. But if particles of matter are repelled, something must repel them. In repelling material particles, something must be concerned, which is not matter. It must be Deity himself, or some spiritual agent, employed by him. This unavoidably results from the axiom, that "nothing can act, where it is not." From these observations, it follows that the providence of God over the material world, must in the most rigid sense be particular. It extends to every particle of matter; and the combinations, which are formed in the material world, can result from nothing, but the immediate agency of God.

But, you reply, that attraction is known to be subject to certain laws, agreeably to which the comparative attraction of bodies may be calculated. You may imagine, that it approaches an absurdity, that men should be enabled, by mathematical calculations, to foretell in what degree Deity will operate on two bodies to draw them towards each other. But the fact is, that this implies no absurdity. It amounts to nothing more than that God is uniform in his operations. He is pleased to prescribe certain laws to himself, agreeably to which effects are produced. As there has hitherto been great uniformity in the

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divine government over material objects, we presume there will be uniformity in future. We presume that he will operate upon matter to-morrow, or next year, agreeably to the laws hitherto observed. On this ground rest all our calculations, as to motion among celestial bodies, and as to any effects, hereafter to occur in the material universe.

4. In the last place, we are to consider, whether the providence of God extends to the moral world; i. e. whether the relations of intelligent creatures are in any measure influenced by Deity.

This appears to be one of those subjects, on which pagan philosophers were not agreed. *Cotta*, who is made by *Cicero* to sustain the part of an Academic, speaks most decidedly against the opinion of any divine agency in the production of moral virtue. "All men, says he, attribute the external advantages, which they enjoy, to the gods, such as plenty of corn, oil, wine, and fruits, and every convenience and prosperous event of life. But, no man ever acknowledged his having received his virtue from God:"—virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam deo retulit.—Num quis, quod bonus vir esset, gratias diis agit unquam?* Other pagan moralists express sentiments very different from these; and seem clearly to acknowledge the dependence of man on celestial influence, for virtuous dispositions. (Leland 1. 339.)

That God has a perfect knowledge of human actions, has been shown in a former lecture. Without such knowledge his government must always be perplexed and uncertain. Though we are carefully to avoid the opinion, that God is the efficient cause of moral evil, a divine influence on human actions is not to be denied. Nor is it, *in most cases*, difficult to conceive, how this may comport with the free agency of man.

This may be illustrated by several examples. Let it be supposed, that a vessel is ready for sea, and that the whole crew are engaged. The intention of the great Creator is, that the vessel shall never return. His intention is, however, that a certain individual of the persons engaged, shall not be lost.

* De Nat. Deor. 3. 36.

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At the hour, when this person was to go on board, he breaks a limb, or is invaded by some disorder, which disqualifies him for service. He tarries at home, and is saved. Or, perhaps, the arrangement was, that he should be taken on board at such a place. By some casualty he is prevented from arriving there at the hour appointed. Here is nothing, which infringes on human liberty.

It was, we have seen, the divine intention to save the captive Jews from the sword of Haman. The condition of the Jewish people was distinctly known to the Deity. The temper, talents, character and influence of Mordecai and the queen were equally known. It was likewise known, how the king's mind would be influenced by a recollection of Mordecai's past fidelity, and what effect Mordecai's elevation would have on Haman's pride. Nothing was necessary therefore but to bring Mordecai's services to the king's recollection. Had some person at this moment suggested that a conspiracy had once been detected by the faithfulness of this Jew, no one would imagine, that by such an event, the king's free agency would have been affected. Suppose now, that Deity did, at this time, suggest to his mind some consideration, which it was known, would operate as a motive to command the public chronicles to be read. Would the king's freedom be infringed in this case, more than in the other? And was not the servant in waiting as free, when that particular portion of the volume presented itself, as he would have been had a different section or chapter been before his eyes? Yet, this in connexion with other circumstances previously existing, was sufficient to save the Jews.

We little consider how minute are many circumstances, which influence human conduct, and how perfectly these circumstances are under the control of Deity. A high wind, or a moist atmosphere may prevent a person from commencing a journey, which would, if undertaken, be accompanied with lasting evils to himself and family. The breaking of some trifling article of furniture may induce him to go abroad, when, but for him, a neighbor's house recently taken fire, would be undiscov-

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ered and consumed.—On the mind of a person superstitiously inclined, a dream might have great influence to induce him, either to prosecute or abandon a particular enterprise. Yet, the train of thoughts in the mind of a sleeping person may be influenced by the particular state of the body; which state of body is unquestionably subject to the control of Deity.

To enable a person to view a subject more or less clearly has nothing to do with his free agency. He, who has, at this moment but an indistinct view of the consequences and bearings of a particular measure, is no more free than he will be tomorrow, when he shall contemplate the subject with more clearness. Therefore, should Deity enable a man to view a subject more distinctly, at one time, than at another, the freedom of the latter would not be thereby impaired. Yet this circumstance might be attended with the most important consequences, as to his future conduct. And if a divine influence can be exerted consistently with human freedom, there are the same arguments to prove, that it will be, as there are to prove, that the material world is under the providence of God; for he cannot take less interest in the former than in the latter.

From the preceding observations, we make this remark, that there is as truly a providence in one event, as in another, in the dissolution of a sparrow, as in the death of a statesman, though perhaps the consequences of one event are more important than those of the other; or, if not, these consequences may not in both cases be equally exposed to human investigation.

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LECTURE IX.

SOUL'S IMMORTALITY.

Having in the preceding lectures, considered the evidence afforded by the light of nature in proof of the being, attributes, and providence of God, I am next to inquire what evidence may be derived from the same source, in favor of the soul's immortality and a future retribution.

These subjects must not be confounded, the one with the other; for the doctrine of a retribution does not necessarily result from that of the soul's immortality. We might exist forever, and yet not be the objects of a retribution. But, as there are some important arguments in favor of the former, which have a more direct bearing upon the latter, our views of the evidence which supports them cannot be perfectly distinct.

The soul's immortality and a future existence will be used as convertible terms. A retribution, it will be considered, has a different meaning.

It will be convenient to divide the proofs to be adduced into two kinds. Those, which arise from facts without considering the moral character of the Supreme Being, and those, which result from his moral character.

1. From the objects and occurrences which we at present observe, what opinion should we be justified in forming, as to a future existence?

In answering this question, a free use will be made occasionally of ideas, suggested in Butler's Analogy. To those who have studied that invaluable work, this mode of proceeding may serve to familiarize the arguments, which it contains. To others, it may serve to give some idea of the manner of reason-

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ing adopted in a book, to which, in the course of college studies, their attention will be directed.

Mankind seem much agreed in expecting the repetition of effects, which are known to have frequently occurred. As we have always observed, that there is rapid vegetation when the air is warm, and the ground moist, we confidently believe, that these occurrences will be connected in future. Because, by observation, for fifty or a hundred years, it is found, that certain plants *have* not survived the winter, we conclude, that they will not in future. If a particular kind of air has been known to destroy animal life in a thousand instances, it is inferred, that the next animal, which inhales it, will die. This kind of reasoning is thought to be equally strong, perhaps even more so in relation to objects, than in regard to events. If there has been a river, a rock, or a mountain in such a place for a long time, we have no more doubt of its present existence there, than if our eyes were now fixed upon it. There is always a very strong presumption, that objects and effects will remain as they have been, until some evidence to the contrary is exhibited. Almost all the business of life is transacted on this supposition. The farmer puts his seed into the ground, not because he knows it will germinate, but because he presumes it from the uniformity, with which this effect has been hitherto produced. The merchant sends his property to the West Indies, not because he knows that those islands now exist, but because he knows they have existed, and he has no evidence of their submersion.

On the same principle, our present existence as intelligent beings affords a presumption that we shall exist hereafter. This presumption will be very strong, until we have some evidence to the contrary. But you suppose, perhaps, that death does afford this contrary evidence. Let us spend a few moments in the examination of this point.

We do, indeed, witness the dissolution of human bodies; but no person will say, that he ever witnessed the dissolution of a human soul. He only infers the latter event from the former. He concludes, that the rational being does not exist, because

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the material body is dissolved, which the rational agent used to actuate. The inference would be much stronger, were it found by experience, that the rational being varied in proportion to the variations of the body. Were it fact, that when a man loses part of his flesh, he loses part of his intellect, and becomes henceforward less a living and rational agent;—were it found that when a man loses a hand, he loses part of his rational existence, and that, when he loses an arm, he loses a still greater part of this same rational existence;—were it found, that the loss of an eye or a leg renders him still less an intelligent being, there would doubtless be more reason to conjecture that the destruction of the whole body would be the entire annihilation of the man; though all these circumstances would be very far from constituting a sufficient proof. But such facts as these do not exist. The reasoning power of man, his capacity for pleasure or pain, for loving or hating, are as great, when his body is emaciated, as when it is plethoric. They are as great, after he has lost some of his limbs, as they were before. It is evident, therefore, that a considerable part of our bodies is, strictly speaking, no part of ourselves. A hand, a leg, an eye, may perish; nay, the whole body may be greatly attenuated by sickness or hard labor, and yet we ourselves remain what we were, conscious of the same actions, of the same good or ill-desert.

Further; We are now the same rational beings, that we were at the age of ten years; yet in our bodies, since that time, there has been a vast alteration. Many particles, then pertaining to to us, have gone off, and have become united to other substances. A much greater number, which then pertained to other bodies, have now become a part of our own. It is very evident that neither those, which have been lost, nor those which have been received, are any part of ourselves. Having once existed without them, we may again.

But, if so great a part of our bodies may be dissolved, and we still remain the same living creatures, capable of happiness or misery; how does it appear, that the whole may not be dis-

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solved, and we ourselves remain? If the destruction of a hand, an arm, or a leg, does not prove the destruction of that living agent, which once set these limbs in motion, how does it appear, that the destruction of the whole body is the destruction of the same living agent?

It is true, indeed, that the body, when dead, gives no evidence of the existence of a soul or spirit. But the same is equally true of an amputated limb. Should we see a surgeon depositing in the ground an arm of the human body, it would be preposterous to infer the annihilation of the living agent, to whom the member once belonged. What right then have we, when the whole human body is in the condition of that limb, to infer the annihilation of that agent, to whom the whole belonged?

But, perhaps, you infer the destruction of the soul or the living agent, not so much from the impossibility of its future *existence*, as from the supposed impossibility of surviving *the shock*, which the body endures at death.

In some instances, it is well known, the soul, or the rational being receives no injury at all from the gradual failure of the body. Immediately before death, the person has as quick perception, as clear a judgment, as strong a memory, as he had in health. His capacity for suffering or enjoyment has, in no degree, diminished. Yet it is very probable, that the shock, yet to occur, the alteration to be experienced in the body, is not greater, perhaps not nearly as great, as that which has occurred already. And if all, which the body has hitherto suffered, has done no injury to the soul, or the rational being, why should we believe that the short sufferings, still remaining, will destroy the soul, or the rational being?

This argument, brought for the purpose of showing that the destruction of the body does not prove the destruction of the soul, will appear the more important, it is believed, the more it is examined.

But it may be said, on the other hand, that many bodily disorders do evidently affect the mind;—that in some cases, the rational existence seems to be destroyed even more rapidly than

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the animal existence; that is, the perception, the judgment, and the memory are all lost before death.

Let us examine this argument, so plausible in its appearance. You say, that certain diseases reduce the patient to such a state before death, that he has no perception, that he remembers nothing, and can judge of nothing. Hence you infer, that death destroys the soul? Is this a legitimate consequence? Does not sound sleep,—does not a swoon produce similar effects? A person, in either of these cases, gives no evidence of any intellectual operation. Now in sleep, or a swoon, the soul is not destroyed. The rational being still exists, as appears by his subsequent revival and activity. But in this case, you say, there is only a suspension of his intellectual efforts. And, pray, how do you know, that there is, at death, any thing more, than such suspension of intellectual efforts?

Were it reduced to a certainty, that all persons, at death, lose their consciousness as truly as a person in a swoon or lethargy, it would by no means follow, that the soul, or the rational being is destroyed. His perception, memory, judgment, and consciousness might return in one case, as well as in the other. But the fact is, we have no reason to think, that this suspension of intellectual efforts, is in *all* instances experienced. We have no reason to doubt, that the person, whose mind is perfectly active and vigorous a moment before death, has his mind equally active a moment after.

But if we infer, that the dissolution of the body does not necessarily produce the destruction of the soul, or the rational being, because some dying persons manifest a perfectly vigorous mind, while their bodies are dissolving; you imagine, perhaps, that the reasoning would be as good, were you to infer, that the death of the body *does* produce the destruction of the soul, because the soul, or rational being is, in *many* instances, disordered, or, to appearance, destroyed, while the body is suffering by disease.

On a little reflection we shall be convinced, that the reasoning contained in this objection has no real weight. The soul

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may be affected without being destroyed; but it cannot be destroyed without being affected. As in some cases, it is not affected, i. e. it is not deranged or enfeebled, by all the sufferings which the body endures previously to death, we presume, that it is not destroyed by death itself. But, because it is in other cases affected by the sufferings of the body, we can, by no means, presume, that death destroys it; knowing as we do, from sleep and a swoon, that intellectual efforts may be affected and even suspended, while the soul as truly exists, as ever. Whatever probability of the soul's continued existence arises from one case is, therefore, in no degree diminished by the other.

Hitherto the divine moral character has not been taken into view. Even without doing this we find, that there is probability of a future state. The argument is this: We now exist; it is therefore probable we shall continue to exist, unless there is some evidence to the contrary. But contrary evidence we find there is not.

As there is this probability of a future existence, independently of the moral character of Deity; so neither would it be certain, that we should not exist hereafter, even could it be made certain, that there is no God; neither would that evidence of a future life, which has already been adduced, be diminished by such a supposition. For, if you have existed twenty years, without a Deity, you may exist, for aught any one knows to the contrary, a hundred, or a thousand years, or indefinitely. If chance, or nature has produced the present state, it may produce another. If we exist by chance, and it is by chance that virtue is now in some degree connected with happiness, and vice with misery; we may hereafter exist by chance, and by the same chance, there may be a retribution;—the connexion between virtue and happiness, vice and misery may be more obvious and perfect, than it is at present.

We are now, in the second place, to consider, what evidence of a future state, may be derived from the character of God, as

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made known by the works of nature. This part of the subject cannot be disconnected with the proofs of a retribution.

It has been heretofore shown, that God is omniscient, and therefore, a perfect Judge of characters. He has a distinct knowledge of the different characters of men. But God not only possesses knowledge; he is likewise morally pure. When therefore, he sees virtue, he must approve it. It is a resemblance of his own character. When he sees vice, it must necessarily excite his displeasure and disgust. It cannot be conceived, that any good being, whether human or divine, should view with indifference, opposite moral qualities. This is agreeable to the common sense of mankind. Should a parent look on the profligate part of his family, with indifference, or with as much approbation, as on those members of it, who distinguish themselves by probity, diligence, and affection, it would be a fair conclusion, and a conclusion universally drawn, that he had himself no sincere attachment to moral rectitude.

This kind of reasoning was adopted by Socrates, as appears from the following extract from the works of Plato. "You will grant me, saith he, that it is not concealed from the gods, what sort of a man any one is, whether just or unjust. And if this is granted, the one is beloved by the gods, and the other hated." (Leland 2. 351.)

Now if God looks on virtue with approbation, and on vice with hatred and disgust, can it be doubted, that this hatred and approbation will, in some way, be manifest? Does God delight in virtue, and will he not show this delight? Is he offended at crimes, and will he not show his displeasure? If a parent should bestow equal favors on the obedient and disobedient, not manifesting his complacency in the one, more than in the other, his own character for moral rectitude could not be maintained. But if moral rectitude in a parent requires him to make a discrimination between the obedient and disobedient, the same rectitude in the most perfect Being in the universe will lead him to do likewise. No person, I am persuaded, can entertain honorable ideas of God, without believing that in some period

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of human existence, a difference will be made between the precious and the vile. Could all men be assured, that such discrimination would never be made, how acceptable soever such assurance might be to the wicked, much of that respect and reverence for the divine character, which now exist, would be destroyed. Though by such assurance the profligate would be delivered from present melancholy forebodings; they would view the Deity, with less respect and veneration;—I do not say, with less love, for of that they have none; but all men, whether evil or good, have a kind of respect for virtue. However their hearts incline, their understandings declare, that virtue is honorable and of good desert. Nor are they destitute of a sacred reverence for those, in whom virtue is most conspicuous. This reverence is diminished in proportion, as they, for whom it is entertained, discover indifference to moral rectitude. Should such indifference be shown by the Supreme Being, reverence for him would in like manner be diminished.

It seems therefore agreeable to the understanding of all mankind, that a Being of infinite purity should manifest his approbation of obedience, and his abhorrence of crimes.

But the present is by no means a state of perfect retribution. Virtue has, indeed, at present, in many particulars, the ascendency. The virtuous man must be temperate. By this he avoids whatever of ill-health, shame, or poverty would arise from the contrary vice. He must be upright, and observant of promises. He therefore enjoys the confidence of those with whom he has intercourse.

But though according to the present constitution of things, virtuous men receive many advantages, denied to men of opposite character;—though instances are not wanting to show, that the way of the transgressor is hard, the sinner being often made to eat of the fruit of his own ways even at present; yet it is strikingly obvious, that nothing like a *perfect* retribution is experienced on earth. The best characters frequently fail of that success, which crowns unrighteous efforts. A cause, supported

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by unblushing falsehood, obtains adherents and popularity; while another, relying on its own intrinsic merit, is deserted.

Now if Deity loves virtue and abhors vice, and if his love to the one and aversion from the other is not *distinctly* manifested in this life, the inference is, that there will be another state, in which all the disorders of the present shall be rectified. The soul will exist after the body is dead; and the divine Author of human souls will, at some period of their existence, and by some means, make an obvious discrimination between the friends and enemies of virtue. His own character being that of spotless moral purity, the friends of virtue must be his friends, and the friends of vice must be his enemies.

From the moral character of God, we are led to believe, not only that there will be a general distinction between the righteous and the wicked, but that this distinction will vary in precise agreement with their different shades of character. The moral worth, or demerit of individuals will be estimated with undeviating precision. For if our Creator hates vice, his hatred is greatest to that vice, which is most enormous. If he loves virtue, his love is the greatest to those who possess it in the most eminent degree.

It is no small presumption in favor of revealed religion, that its representations as to a future state so perfectly correspond with those inferences, which reason teaches us to make from the phenomena of nature. If reason leads us to infer, that the Supreme Being, infinitely pure himself, will at some time, and in some manner, manifest his love of virtue and hatred of vice, Christianity asserts this in every page. It makes a future life every thing, and the present comparatively nothing.—And, whereas it is reasonable to conclude from the character of God, as manifested in his works, not only that a general discrimination will be made between the precious and the vile, but that a retribution will correspond precisely with the shade of each character, revealed religion declares that, in the general result, all circumstances will be impartially regarded. It represents God, as a Being, by whom actions are weighed: Every work

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shall be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or bad. As many, as have sinned without law, shall perish without law, and as many, as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law, in the day, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ .

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LECTURE X.

SOUL'S IMMORTALITY.

In the last lecture, your attention was called to the evidence, arising from present objects and events, in favor of a future state and retribution. The general presumption which there is, that objects will continue as they are, was mentioned in proof of a future life, or rather the continuance of man's existence. The inequalities of the present state, that is the want of agreement between the present circumstances and the moral qualities of men, when viewed in connexion with the perfect character of God, were mentioned as proofs, that human existence will extend beyond the grave.—The argument may be expressed more briefly. The moral rectitude of God requires, that he should treat his creatures agreeably to their respective characters. This appears not to be done in the present life; therefore there will be another.

But though there is nothing like a perfect retribution at present, it may well deserve inquiry, whether there is not even *now*, a tendency towards a retribution, and even some degree of it actually begun. By attending to this inquiry, we shall ascertain whether analogy is in favor of the doctrine, or against it. If there is any connexion between human happiness and human virtue in the *present* life, it is analogous, that there should be such a connexion hereafter, supposing the reality of a future state. If the conduct and character of man, at the age of twenty, has any influence on his condition thirty years after, it would be analogous, that the condition of human beings an hundred, or a thousand years hence, on supposition of their existing for

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so long a time, should be influenced by their present lives and habits.

It is a fact, perfectly obvious, that *some* connexion at present subsists between the character and happiness of human beings. Some actions and some habits are very generally attended with competency, health, a fair reputation, and the good wishes of men; while poverty, a broken constitution, contempt, and general dislike, do, in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred, attend those habits, which are of an opposite description. We well know, that part of mankind choose one of these courses, and part, the other. We are daily called to witness the distribution of these rewards and punishments. We see some persons in the enjoyment of cheerfulness and health in consequence of their temperance and prudence. We see others, whom the opposite mode of living enfeebles, emaciates, or absolutely brings to the grave.

It is evident, then, that a retribution is, by no means, abhorrent from what we now behold. For though there is nothing here, like a perfect distribution of rewards and punishments, they are, to a certain degree, distributed. So that, if hereafter they should be dealt out with precision, it would seem only the perfection of a system, which is now incipient. If, according to the common and natural course of events, certain modes of conduct produce suffering, and opposite modes of conduct produce enjoyment, there is, so far, a retribution, and this retribution is from God; because God is the Author of that course of nature, agreeably to which it is produced. It is he, that gives health and vigor to the temperate man, and sends imbecility and pain to the licentious.

That God does, to a certain degree, reward and punish human beings in this life proves indeed that he maintains a *government* over them; but does not of itself prove, that his government is moral. The distinction is this; a parent might reward those actions only in his children, which contributed to his interest, and punish those only, which are injurious to it,

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without taking into consideration the morality of either. In this case, his government would not be moral.

But as it is obvious, that God in his present government of the world favors a certain course of conduct among his creatures, and brings inconveniences and trouble on those, who proceed in an opposite direction, it is no less certain, that the distinction between these courses is a moral distinction. It is not questionable, whether a life of sobriety, kindness, and probity is, on the whole, and other things being equal, more conducive to present happiness, than the contrary vices.

A man would evince as clearly his want of judgment as of morals, who should tell a young inquirer, that in order to obtain the greatest sum of enjoyment, it would be advisable to violate truth, to take all possible advantage of the ignorance of others, to cultivate no kind and generous feelings, to remove all restraints from his appetites, and to manifest a total disregard to those obligations which are usually thought to result from morality and religion. That the way to prevent happiness lies in a direction contrary to this is too evident to need proof. I well know, that many liars prosper, that many fraudulent men prosper; but these are only exceptions to a general rule, and do nothing towards the subversion of it. It is yet true, in a general sense, that he, who walketh uprightly, walketh surely. They, who suitably regard the present state of things, must see that the constitution, under which we are placed, is designed to favor virtue, rather than vice, and that the Infinite Being, who is the Author of this constitution, has shown himself to be on the side of the upright;—not barely on the side of those who perform actions which are suitable and fit, but who do them with good *intentions*. For the good intentions, with which a man does an action, constitute no inconsiderable reward; and the ill intention, with which the same action is done by another, either destroys the inward pleasure, or produces remorse.

Notwithstanding the wealth and greatness of many profligates, attentive observation of the present course of events would, it is believed, fully justify Peter's doctrine: He, that will love

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life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile; let him eschew evil and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are open to the righteous; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

We may now, I think, without taking any thing for granted, which has not been proved, assert the following things, viz.

1. As we are at present under a moral government, if we should exist after death, analogy requires, that we should then be under a moral government.

2. As the Creator of the universe now shows himself to be on the side of virtue, he will after death, should we then exist, make a distinction between the friends of virtue, and its enemies.

3. If this distinction should be perfect, i. e. exactly corresponding with the respective characters of men; in other words, if a retribution should be perfect, it would be only the completion of a system, many traces of which are now discernible.

4. The moral character of God requires, that a perfect retribution should take place, and consequently a future state.

I do not say, that these arguments are sufficient to remove every shadow of doubt; nor do I believe, that without revelation, the minds of the most inquisitive part of mankind could be *perfectly* at rest on this subject: But that the preponderance of evidence is in favor of a future state, has, it is conceived, been made to appear.

I will now consider some of those circumstances, which are often mentioned by way of objection to that part of future retribution, which consists in punishment. The object will be, to ascertain whether these circumstances do not prove as strongly against *present*, as against *future* punishment. If they do, they will have no force. For an objection, which lies against a proposition, known to be true, can never prove, that another proposition is false.

1. You suppose, that if there were to be a punishment of vice after death, it would be rendered more certain, than it is

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from the light of nature;—that each individual would be clearly and distinctly informed, as to the consequences of his crimes.

It is replied, that the punishments, which wicked men receive in this life, are by no means universally foreseen with that clearness here mentioned. When a man is guilty of forgery, or any other species of fraud, has he perfect assurance of being punished? So far from this, that he supposes the probability to be strong against detection. When murder is committed, is the gibbet or the gallows distinctly in the culprit's view? He not only expects to evade discovery, but circumstances may be such, as to render his expectations very reasonable. Yet, when he is detected, the law is not executed, on that account, with less certainty or with less rigor. Does the young man of intemperance or general dissipation certainly know the extent of the temporal evils, which he is preparing for himself? Perhaps he believes that a firm constitution will not be impaired by a disorderly life. Yet, when he finds his health injured, his vigor wasted, his spirits sunk, and his credit lost, it avails nothing to say, that this was not anticipated, and that had he distinctly foreseen such an issue, he would have cultivated sobriety.

2. You say, that at present, many immoral persons exhibit not the least evidence of being objects of the divine displeasure. They live in prosperity, and are much at their ease. You suppose, that if Deity viewed them with so much indignation, as to be resolved to punish them hereafter, their lives would not now glide on with so smooth a current.

This reasoning, it is evident, does not hold good in application to the present state. Men do, in some instances, for many years carry on a system of fraud, without loss of reputation, and with a rapid increase of wealth. At length their detection, disgrace, and punishment occur suddenly and almost at the same moment. To use the strong language of Scripture, their destruction cometh as a whirlwind. Some persons guilty of murder, have lived many years without suspicion. But eventually their crimes being brought to light, received merited punishment. Others have indulged their appetites with the

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most guilty excess for a considerable time, without sensibly impairing their health and vigor. Yet, when this violence done to the corporeal system was carried to a certain degree, excruciating pains, or immediate death ensued. We have the evidence of facts, therefore, that delay of punishment is a thing perfectly distinct from final impunity, and that the latter cannot be inferred from the former. The consequence is, that if the prosperous wicked should be punished hereafter, for sins now committed, it would be precisely analogous to facts, which are presented to common observation.

3. Another common objection to the doctrine of future punishment is that many of those, who lead an incorrect life, are actuated not so much by depravity of heart, as by juvenile rashness or the love of pleasure. It would be irrational, some imagine, to suppose that offences thus originating, should be the subject of future retribution.

I do not stay, at present, to show what might easily be shown, that rashness and inattention to moral restraints, are of themselves undeniable proofs of a depraved heart; but only observe, that offences, proceeding from youthful passions and the want of reflection, are very frequently under the government of God punished in this life; and if so, the objection can have no weight against future punishment. If a man is murdered, a house set on fire, or goods stolen, it will not avail the perpetrator to say, that he committed the murder in a great rage; that he fired a house merely for sport, and that he stole the goods with no ill intention, but only that he might thereby be enabled to gratify his youthful appetites. Be it so, that the prodigal has no malicious intentions, while dissipating his paternal inheritance, that his whole crime consists in a servile subjection to his passions; does he, on this account, escape poverty, the loss of character, the want of health, and eventually the loss of life?

But say you, we are creatures extremely frail, and our temptations are strong. For aberrations, which occur under such circumstances, and proceed from creatures, so liable to err, it cannot be supposed, that future punishment is prepared.

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This objection is so nearly allied to the other, as to supersede the necessity of a distinct answer.

4. It is said, that a Being so infinitely exalted as Deity, must be incapable of offence or provocation. God is doubtless free from passions. He feels nothing like the transports of rage. But he sees what is right, and approves it; he sees what is wrong, and abhors it. This necessarily results from his omniscience and moral purity. It would, as we have heretofore shown, be inconsistent with the excellence of the divine character, to be indifferent to the moral character of his creatures; and if the moral conduct of men be in general a fit object of divine regard, it must be so in reference to every individual and every circumstance.

But we may adopt reasoning of a different kind, and appeal to observation. The objection now in view, viz. that a Being so exalted as Deity must be incapable of offence or provocation, if it proves that the offender will not be punished in a future world, proves also, that he cannot be punished in the present, seeing that both worlds, if two there be, are under the same divine government. But, as facts show that it is not inconsistent with divine majesty to bring evil on the offender in the present state, it cannot be inconsistent with the same divine majesty to connect present sin with future suffering.

5. There is one further objection of a very imposing aspect, viz. there is, in fact, no liberty in the universe. We and all other beings act according to a necessity, from which there can be no variation; by consequence future punishment will be unjust.

My present object is not to investigate the doctrine of necessity; but only to show that if it were true, it would not disprove a future retribution; because if there is a degree of retribution, in this life, notwithstanding we act necessarily; there may be, in a future life, the same or even a greater degree of retribution notwithstanding. The objection therefore, whatever it might prove against the justice of retribution, would do nothing towards disproving the existence of the fact.

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But as to the justice or injustice of punishing human conduct, on supposition there were through the universe a system of necessity, I much question whether either term could be applied. A system of universal necessity, you perceive, embraces one being, as well as another. It comprehends no less him who punishes, than him who sins. If the robber cannot refrain from breaking open a house, the officer cannot refrain from apprehending him, the judge cannot avoid condemning him, nor can the executioner refrain from inflicting the punishment. If it were unjust to blame the robber, it would be equally unjust to blame any of those, who were instrumental in his punishment, they and he being influenced by the same necessity. We are far from allowing the existence of such a necessity, but even if it did exist, it would neither disprove the fact of future punishment, nor show such punishment to be unjust.

Having considered the most plausible objections against the doctrine of a future retribution, I proceed briefly to inquire how it may be reasonably expected, that such retribution should be regulated.

That the retribution should be universal, results from the perfect rectitude of the Supreme Being. It has been shown, that the rewards and punishments of a future life will be in exact proportion to the moral qualities of those, to whom they will be distributed. It hence follows, that no action, possessing intrinsic moral worth, however inconsiderable it may appear, will pass without a proportionable mark of divine approbation; and that no action, that is immoral, can on account of its minuteness, escape punishment. If the *greatest* vices are offensive to Deity, the *smallest* must be so for the same reason. Alike in nature, they differ only in degree. Men who exercise their reason on this subject, clearly perceive, that to speak of God as punishing great vices, and suffering others to pass unnoticed, as requiring obedience in some instances and tolerating disobedience in others, is to treat in a very dishonorable manner the most excellent Being in the universe. Among men a perfect government cannot be maintained. An exact proportion between crimes and

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punishment is impossible in regard both to the judge and the legislator. But with the Supreme Lawgiver, nothing is more easy. His laws are adapted to every possible variation of circumstances; and his discernment of the complexion and relation of actions is intuitive and infallible.

From the divine character it results with equal certainty that the state, temper, and purposes of the heart will be considered in the final retribution. As this results from the divine perfections so is it proved by analogy. In whatever of retribution occurs at present, the design of the action, the state of heart, from which it proceeds, is taken into the account. God has so constituted our species, that proud, selfish, malicious feelings do of themselves bring punishment, even when they are concealed from the view of men. Humble and benevolent dispositions, on the other hand, are accompanied with present reward. The man who performs an action with benevolent dispositions obtains enjoyment to which he is a stranger, who with opposite intentions performs a similar action. This retribution is the more perfect, in proportion as these intentions are displayed. When the character of a benevolent and upright man is known, he enjoys not only a consciousness of rectitude, but the approbation and good will of others. The selfish and malicious, if their true characters are made public, know, not only that they *ought* to be viewed with displeasure, but that in fact they *are* thus viewed. In the treatment, which these persons receive, there is a material difference. Suppose both in adversity. The attention bestowed on one, is prompt and abundant; the attention bestowed on the other, is cold and sparing. In the imperfect retribution, which is effected in this world, it is evident that the intentions and state of heart are by no means left out of the account. There is this argument from analogy, therefore, as well as a more conclusive one, resting on the moral character of God, to prove, that in the future distribution of rewards and punishments, human purposes and designs will be investigated.

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LECTURE XI.

NECESSITY OF REVELATION.

No person, opening the New Testament for the first time, could be insensible how much he is interested to ascertain its claims. He would perceive immediately, that the subjects, of which it treats, have relation to the eternal destiny of man. He would perceive, that if the writers of this book were not what they pretended, no language can express the boldness of their impiety; and that if they were, all other publications become insignificant, when compared with their writings.

To exhibit a general view of the evidence, which supports Christianity, will be attempted in subsequent lectures. As a preparation for which, several will be employed in considering this question, whether the state of mankind were such, as to render necessary any light, in addition to that which is reflected by the works and providence of God.

We are indeed extremely unqualified to determine *a priori*, what measures would, under given circumstances, comport with divine wisdom and benevolence. Many parts of God's administration are evidently different from what, with our limited views, we should have expected. It would be presumptuous then to determine, with confidence, how much light the wisdom of God would incline him to impart, or what state of things would demand his interposition. Yet the probability of a revelation, on supposition that mankind without it generally entertained correct views of religious truth, would be considerably less, than if it should be found, on inquiry, that gross ignorance on the subject had generally prevailed in the world.

As all religion is founded on our relation to a supreme in-

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telligent Being, it is proper to begin our inquiry concerning the necessity of revelation, by considering what opinions as to the divine nature, have prevailed among the heathen, whether ancient or modern.

That ancient nations worshipped a multiplicity of gods, is a proposition, which requires no proof to any one, in the slightest degree acquainted with the Greek and Roman historians and poets.* So early, as the time of Hesiod, there were reckoned thirty thousand gods, inhabiting the earth, who were subjects of Jupiter, and guardians of men.† These deities were to be considered, as in a sense domesticated in Greece. In addition to these, Abp. Potter informs us, that there was a custom, which obliged them to entertain many strange gods.‡

The religion of the Greeks was probably derived from Phœnicia, Egypt, and Thrace, and was transmitted to the Romans.§

In our inquiry as to the necessity of revelation, it may be convenient to consider, what views of the Deity were entertained by those, whose superior application and wisdom procured for them the distinction of philosophers. But, as these were comprised in a very small number, when compared with the whole mass of the pagan world, their opinions, even were they less discordant than they are, would by no means enable us to ascertain the popular belief. The opinion of a few wise and studious men was one thing; and that of the great mass of the community, another. To obtain the latter, I know not that any method can be more effectual, than to consult the writings of poets and historians. The writings of philosophers may indeed contribute, in no inconsiderable degree, to the same object; not because the opinions, which they entertained, indicate those of the vulgar; but because their practice was much influenced by the prevailing sentiment, which seems to have been occasionally animadverted upon in their writings.

* Priestley's Lectures on Jew. Rel. 63.
† Hesiod. Oper. and Dies. L. I. 250.
‡ Gr. Antiq. I. 202. § Cudworth Int. Syst. I. 187.

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The testimony of historians will, I suppose, be thought liable to no exception. For surely there can be no reason, why their testimony in regard to religion, should not be as readily taken, as when it relates to natural history, forms of government, or military operations. On the testimony of poets, it may be thought, that less reliance can be placed.

It is not indeed necessary to conclude, that the ancient poets always believed what they wrote concerning the gods. But, that they both designed and expected that others should believe it, I think there can be little doubt. To give pleasure, is allowed to be the great aim of poetry. Extensively to accomplish this end, it must contain nothing offensive to the prevailing opinion. A poet, who writes fiction, is careful to construct his fable in such a manner, as shall not be abhorrent from the feelings and temper of his readers. Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," uses much fiction. But, had this been of such a kind, as to disgrace and belie the Christian religion, would this admirable poem have acquired popularity in a Christian nation? Ancient poets had not less sagacity, than those of later times. Would the poets of Greece and Italy have agreed, almost without an exception, in such representation of religion and the gods, as was generally disbelieved; and which, if believed, must have appeared, as it really was, a disgrace to human reason, and blasphemous to the Supreme Being?

I cannot represent this matter more clearly, than in the words of the learned Mr. Farmer.

"The accounts given of the heathen gods, by the poets, did in fact constitute both the popular and civil theology; or the religion received by the people, and established by the laws.*

"The people," continues he, "were more disposed to adopt the doctrine of the poets, than any physical interpretation; and regarded their writings, as their rule both of faith and worship. Even the most absurd fables were understood literally, and re-

* Worship of Human Spirits 292. for which he quotes Aug. Civ. Dei. L. I. c. 132. Dio Chrys. Dion. Hal. Cic. de Nat. Deor. 2. 24.

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ceived by the people, with implicit faith, in Greece, as well as in other countries."

"With regard to epic and dramatic poets, they cannot, without great impropriety, deviate from the customs of the ages, of which they write; the merit of their writings consisting very much in their being accurate representations of life and manners. Whenever, therefore, the poets, of whom we are now speaking, use the liberty of embellishment, their very fictions must be conformable to the received standard of the public religion."

Agreeable to this are the words of the profound Dr. Cudworth: "We cannot," says he, "make a better judgment concerning the generality and bulk of the ancient pagans, than from the poets and mythologists, who were the chief instructors of them."*

There is a remarkable passage in Plato's Timaeus, as quoted by Dr. Leland. "The poet cannot sing," says the Greek philosopher, "except he be full of God, and carried out of himself. "They do not say these things by art, but by a divine power. God uses them, as his ministers, as he does the deliverers of oracles, and divine prophets, that we, hearing them, might know, that it is not they themselves, who speak those excellent things, since they have not then the use of their understanding, and that it is God, who speaks by them." Socrates is represented by Plato, as conversing to the same effect.

What higher authority could language express? If the assertions here made had been true, the assent given by the ancient heathen to poetical representations ought not to have been less than that which Christians yield to the sacred Scriptures. And it must be considered, that this is the language not of the illiterate vulgar, but of two among the wisest and best men of the heathen world. If men of such character attribute

* Int. System. 1. 251. Consult also Cave's Prim. Christianity, 294. You may imagine, says Lord Bacon, what kind of faith theirs was, when the chief fathers and doctors of the church were the poets. Vol. I. 449.

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to the ancient bards a real inspiration, it can hardly be doubted, that the credulous multitude would receive poetical rhapsodies, as the standard of theological truth. It is just, therefore, to form our opinion of the religious sentiments which prevailed among the heathen, by the works of their most admired poets.

The multitude of heathen gods has already been mentioned, on the authority of Hesiod. The same theology was taught by Homer among the Greeks; by Virgil and Horace among the Latins; and, in general, by the poets of both nations.

So far there is no doubt. But in what light these numerous deities were considered, is in some degree less obvious. Dr. Cudworth has employed his extraordinary talents to prove, that, notwithstanding the objects of pagan worship were so numerous, the unity of God was still maintained. He supposes the ancient pagans to have thought, that there was one Supreme Deity, from whom all the rest proceeded, and on whom they were dependent. The dependence of these deities, he does not consider as being in popular estimation inconsistent with their eternity; as the Supreme God was supposed not only to have possessed, but, from eternity, to have exerted the power of producing others. He makes numerous quotations to prove, that this distinction was maintained both among philosophers and poets.

To this it may be answered, that though it is perfectly clear, that the poets denominated Jupiter, almighty, the king and father of gods and men; yet, as these deities were made the objects of distinct worship, and were considered as sovereign, each in his own dominions, and all as possessing moral characters, not essentially different, it is not very important, so far as human feelings and conduct are concerned, whether these numerous gods held their existence by the power of Jove, or independently of such power. Whatever supremacy was enjoyed by Jupiter in heaven, it was Neptune that governed the ocean; it was Pluto that presided over the realms of death. And though it is true, that Homer, and Virgil, and Horace, occasionally speak of Jupiter in terms the most sublime and

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majestic, it is not less true, that on other occasions, their language is exceedingly different. The same father of gods and men, who is represented as grasping the thunder, and as governing the world's destiny, is acknowledged to have been once a Cretan boy. The dangers of his infancy are recorded; the savage temper and jealousy of his father; the expedients used by his mother for his preservation; the manner in which he was nourished in his youth; the insurrection which he made against paternal authority, and the rebellion, which was commenced against his own; the number of wives which he married, and the family which he reared.

The same Homer, who speaks of Jupiter, in language of such peculiar sublimity; as of him, who rules both gods and men, mentions his being in danger from a combination of other gods, Juno, Neptune, and Pallas, who had conspired to bind him in fetters; and that Thetis delivered him, and averted the danger, by calling in Briareus to his assistance.*

Hesiod applies to Jupiter epithets not less magnificent than those which are used by Homer. Notwithstanding this, he informs us that Jupiter was born of Saturn and Rhea; that Pluto and Neptune were his brothers; and that Vesta, Ceres, and Juno, were his sisters.

The language in which Jupiter is mentioned by Virgil, seems to have been copied from Homer. He represents Venus as addressing him thus, "O thou, who, by thine eternal sovereignty, governest the affairs of gods and men."† Yet in other parts of the poem, we behold Jupiter with no ensigns of eternal majesty, and not only under the influence of mortal passions, but perplexed by human embarrassments. He has a sister and daughter importuning him to opposite measures; neither of whom can be gratified but at the expense of the other.

Horace has been justly admired for the grandeur of his language, when celebrating the praises of Jupiter.‡

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* Hom. Iliad. I. 397. † Æn. I. 229. ‡ Od. I. 12.

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"Claims not the eternal Sire his wonted praise?
Awful, who reigns o'er gods and men supreme,
Who sea and earth, this universal globe,
With grateful change of seasons guides;
From whom no being of superior power,
Nothing of equal, second glory, springs."

Francis.

In the fourth Ode of the third book, there is a passage strikingly adapted to our present purpose.

O'er gods and mortals, o'er the dreary plains,
And shadowy ghosts supremely just he reigns.
But, dreadful in his wrath, to hell pursued
With thunders, headlong rage, the fierce Titanian brood;
Whose horrid youth, elate with impious pride,
Unnumbered, on their sinewy force relied;
Mountain on mountain piled they rais'd in air,
And shook the throne of Jove, and made the thunderer fear."

Francis.

Here, you perceive that this Jupiter, to whom the poet ascribes omnipotence, is thrown into consternation by an insurrection among his subalterns.

From these quotations it may be judged, whether, if the ancient pagans held opinions in religion, conformable to the doctrine of the poets, they could have entertained any just views of the divine supremacy and independence.

It has been further said, that the various heathen deities were nothing but names, or notions of the Supreme God, according to his various powers and manifestations; it being thought fit, that those different glories and perfections of the Deity should not be crowded together in one general acknowledgment of an invisible being, the maker of the world; but that each of these perfections should be severally and distinctly displayed.*

Now if this representation were true, how should there ever happen discord among the gods? If Jupiter only signifies the

* Cudw. Int. Sys. 1. 268. Priestley's Inst. of Moses. Northumberland, 1799, p. 78.

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supreme power, as exerted in heaven, and Neptune the same power exerted in earth, how could one join in a conspiracy for dethroning the other? The power of God in one part of the universe cannot be adverse to the same power in another part of it. Yet we are told by the poets, that Neptune took part in a rebellion, the object of which was to seize on the empire of Jove.

Further, the opinion, now under consideration, seems little consistent with the personality, so distinctly attributed by the poets to the heathen gods. Their temples and worship were altogether distinct; and so it appears were their character and interests. At all events, nothing was less to have been expected, than that the common people should have understood the poets, as meaning what this opinion attributes to them. Accordingly, the learned author, who advances the sentiment, concedes that the unskilful and sottish vulgar, (for so he terms the common pagans,) might sometimes mistake these gods, not only for so many real and substantial, but also independent and self-existent deities.

It is indeed a matter of no small difficulty to determine, with any considerable exactness, in what light the ancient heathen gods were viewed by their votaries. Euhemerus, of Messenia, as mentioned by Cicero, wrote a history of the gods, in which he proved, that they had once been on earth, as mere mortals; and pointed out the places of their respective deaths and burials.* This work was translated into Latin, by Ennius; nor does it appear to have been ill received. Herodotus says that the Persians do not, like the Greeks, consider the gods as of human origin.† Here is the testimony of a grave historian that the Greeks did thus consider them. And the learned writer, whom I have several times mentioned, as laboring to prove, that the heathen, notwithstanding their polytheism, worshipped one God, unoriginated and eternal, from whom the rest proceeded, confesses, that the fabulous theology, both of the

* Cicero de Nat. Deor. 1, 163. Paris. Robert Stephani 1538.
† Lib. 1. 131.

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Greeks and Romans, not only generated all the other gods, but even Jupiter himself, assigning him both father and mother. And this, he tells us, was tolerated and connived at by the politicians, in way of necessary compliance with the vulgar; it being so extremely difficult for them to conceive of any being, whose existence never began.

So far as the lower classes of society are concerned, this concession is a complete abandonment of the opinion, which, with so much learning and ability, he endeavors to establish. For surely, if they considered the supreme Jupiter, as having been once a mortal, there could have been no God, whom they considered, as unoriginated and eternal. The probability seems to be, that they had no distinct or fixed notions on the subject. Certain it is, that the language of the poets is not only various, but absolutely inconsistent. At one time it is such, as can be applied only to a being that is eternal. At other times it is such, as can be true only in relation to mortals.

Let us now inquire into the origin of a fact so remarkable. How did it occur, that the poets attributed to their Supreme Deity discordant and opposite qualities?

It can hardly be doubted, that man, at his creation, received some knowledge of that Being, from whom he originated. The doctrine of one eternal, independent God, when once made known, as it approves itself so clearly to the unbiassed reason of man, would not soon be forgotten. Many ages would elapse, and many errors would be attached to it, before it could be entirely abandoned. Accordingly it is remarked by those, who have most investigated the subject, that the further into antiquity our researches extend, traces of belief of the divine unity and eternity become more numerous.*

It is probable, that the most ancient kind of idolatry consisted in the worship of the heavenly bodies.† Of all natural objects,

* Leland, Advantage and necessity of a revelation. London, 1764, p. 169, et seq. Priestley, Lectures on the Evidences of Revealed Religion, Phil. 1796. p. 59.—On the Inst. of Moses, 279.

† Eus. Præp. Evang. cap. vi.

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these are the most striking. In addition to their majesty and lustre, their apparent motions, and the influence, which they have on vegetation, or the state of the atmosphere, is peculiarly calculated to make an impression. From regarding them as striking displays of divine power, and instruments under the direction of God, men began gradually, and perhaps insensibly, to attribute to them a portion of divinity, and supposed them to perform their revolutions by their own inherent intelligence.

This representation is supported by Cicero's treatise on the Nature of the Gods; in which Balbus, the stoic, is introduced, as disputing with an Epicurean, and endeavoring to show, that the planets must be intelligent beings, as they could not otherwise pursue their respective courses with so much order and constancy. His words are these, "*Hanc igitur in stellis constantiam, hanc tantam, tam variis cursibus in omni eternitate convenientiam, temporum, non possum intelligere, sine mente, ratione, consilio. Quæ quum in sideribus inesse videamus, non possumus ea ipsa non in deorum numero reponere.*"*

That the worship of the celestial luminaries is very ancient, is apparent from the book of Job: "If," saith he, "I beheld the sun, when it shineth, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above."† The worship of the hosts of heaven is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, as prevalent among the heathen. It seems indeed to have been, in the country and period to which that history relates, the most general kind of idolatry. The sun, moon, and stars, there is little doubt, were first worshipped, not as independent deities, but as subordinate to the eternal Sovereign of the Universe.

This kind of worship appears to have prevailed very extensively through the heathen world. Nor was it relinquished at so late a period, as the time of Julian the apostate. There is

* De Nat. Deor. 2. 78. † Job 31: 26—28.

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an oration of his now extant, and recently translated, addressed to the sovereign sun; of which luminary the author professes himself a devout worshipper.

The worship of human spirits was probably subsequent to that of the celestial bodies. How this worship originated, it is impossible for us to determine. Like the other it was, we have reason to believe, introduced by insensible degrees. After the death of any one who had been a benefactor to society, or had acquired a powerful influence, either over the affections or fears of his contemporaries, it was natural that high respect should be paid to his memory. It would be natural to visit the place where his remains were deposited, and to erect some monument to perpetuate his name. That which at first was nothing more than respect, or affection, might by distance of time, become adoration. Those vigorous or beneficent spirits, which once actuated mortal bodies, were supposed not only to retain their existence after death, but to occupy a sort of intermediate state between man and superior intelligences. As the celestial bodies, so no doubt did human souls receive at first, a subordinate worship. They were worshipped as deities, inferior to the First Cause, and dependent on him. This subordinate worship seems now to have been gradually transferred from what are called the natural gods, i. e. the heavenly bodies, to the spirits of departed men.

When there were thus two kinds of worship,—the one rendered to the Supreme Being, and the other to the spirits of human origin, it is no difficult matter to see, that the latter would gain on the former. It must have been apparent, that no worship would be rendered acceptable to the true God, unless it were pure and rational; unless it proceeded from upright dispositions, and tended to increase them. The worship, and even the contemplation of such a Being, would necessarily to sensual and profligate men, be attended with self reproach. They would therefore dislike to retain God in their knowledge. But human spirits had neither the purity nor the majesty of God. Previously to their separation from the body, they had

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all the passions, and all the imperfections and vices, which are common to mortals. In contemplating such deities, little or no self reproach was experienced by their votaries. In not a few instances, a comparison of moral character would, by no means, be disadvantageous to the latter. The rites and ceremonies, with which demons, or departed spirits were worshipped, could not have the same moral expression, as those used in the service of the Almighty. Hence would result both a ritual and system of morality, in no degree offensive to the passions and vices of men. In the service of such gods, men would be much more constant and more engaged, than in the worship of the underived and independent Deity. His worship would not, however, be suddenly or entirely neglected. In favor of it, the voice of reason would be loud and distinct.

In this way are we to account for the discordant and inconsistent language of ancient poets. The notion of one Supreme, Independent God, was not entirely lost. Yet was he not distinctly discernible amidst that varied and impure crowd of deities, who had been profanely ushered into his temple. They recognized his attributes of supremacy, eternity, and independence; but they assigned them to a creature of human origin. They endeavored to invest a mortal with divine habiliments, without concealing his wants, his dependence, or his vices.

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LECTURE XII.

NECESSITY OF REVELATION, AS IT APPEARS FROM THE GODS AND WORSHIP OF THE ANCIENT HEATHEN.

In the last lecture it was observed, that though there appears to have been from the beginning, a traditionary belief of one uncreated, independent Deity, this belief was gradually enfeebled, until the object of it ceased to be distinguishable amidst a numerous and confused group of gods, who were either parts of the Universe, or had been human beings. But these two classes do, by no means, comprehend all the objects, to which religious worship was rendered.

Not only the souls of the dead, but the persons of the living, were treated as divine. This was so common among the Romans, that to swear by the genius of Cæsar, and to worship him by burning incense on his altar, were used as criteria, by which to try those, who were accused of defection from the established belief. In this way Pliny, as he informed Trajan, ascertained whether those, who had been prosecuted as Christians, were really such. When the accused were before him, under trial, he commanded that the emperor's image should be brought, and that they should pay him divine honors, by sacrificing frankincense and wine. They who did this, were acquitted, as having thereby proved their adherence to the ancient religion.*

Not only were divine honors paid to the larger bodies in the universe, and to human beings, both living and dead, but to

* Quinctilian makes a prayer to the emperor Domitian in connexion with other gods Inst. Lib. 4. Præf.

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whatever was found to be of great utility.* To these we may add particular qualities and conditions of human beings, such as Mind, Fidelity, Safety, Liberty, Concord, Victory, etc. These things, says Cicero, are so great, that they cannot be governed without divine agency, and therefore they themselves are denominated gods.† To these, temples were erected, and sacrifices were offered. Nay, even bad qualities, such as passions and vices, became objects of heathen worship; in justification of which, this reason is assigned, that these bad qualities have frequently great influence on human actions.

That animals, reptiles, and vegetables, received among the Egyptians religious adoration, is a fact universally known. It is indeed difficult to contemplate any object, either in the heavens or on the earth, which has not, in some age or country, been treated as divine. Accordingly an eminent author, whose object was to praise the religion of the heathen at the expense of revelation, is constrained to acknowledge that "the gentiles did not only worship the whole world taken together, but its parts, yea, even its particles, or smallest parts; thinking it unbecoming, that some of the most eminent parts of him whom they regarded as God, should be worshipped, and other parts neglected."‡ So true is the remark, that the heathen worshipped every thing as God, but God himself.

But though there was great variety in the objects, to which the ancient heathen paid religious adoration, the worship of departed spirits was a part of their religion, particularly important, both as to its extent, and the effects resulting from it.‖ Mr. Farmer, whose name was mentioned in the last lecture, has shown that human spirits were with a very few exceptions, worshipped in all ancient nations, whether barbarous or polished. It is obvious, that this would be a very interesting part of human worship. Men would be pleased at the thought of hav-

* De Nat. Deor. I. 86. † Ib. 87.

‡ Ld. Herbert, as quoted by Leland. 1. 146.

‖ In Ethiopia, they worshipped their friends immediately after their death, Herod. Thalia. 24.

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ing a deity, who had been in their situation, had possessed their passions, and had experienced their wants. But the moral effect of this worship would depend on the character, ascribed to the being, to whom it was addressed. The worship of human spirits, however absurd, might not, in all cases, produce immorality. Had the pagan deities been perfect in moral qualities, or even as near perfection as have been some distinguished saints, such as Moses or Daniel, the ancient mythology would have been far less offensive and less injurious, than it must have been, on supposition, that their gods had not only been men, but men distinguished for impurity, violence, fraud, revenge and rapacity.

If the objects of pagan worship, therefore, as Euhemerus is said to have shown, and as the Greeks acknowledged,* were once men, it becomes important to inquire what kind of men they were. Were they mild, chaste, upright, meek, benevolent, and pious? Here, in proposing a seemingly rational question, and one, which very naturally occurs, we are involved in absurdity. How could those men, who have since become gods, have been pious? Piety, as the term is now used, has relation to a Supreme Being, and expresses right feelings towards him. But at the time, when the greatest gods among the heathen were men, there could have been no Supreme Being; i. e. no being entitled to the affection, confidence, and adoration of mortals. Those heathen, who believed, that their greatest gods had once been men, must from the nature of the case, have considered them, as men destitute of piety.

But passing over this most important quality, let us briefly inquire what was, in other respects, the character of the pagan gods. Saturn is known to have been jealous, ferocious and cruel. It is not easy to read without a mixture of disgust and indignation, the biography of this god, as transmitted to us by the poets. (Cicero de Nat. Deor. 2. 91.)

Jupiter's character was doubtless an improvement on that of his father. His government was less oppressive, and his tem-

* Herod. 1. 131.

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per less ferocious and savage. But his impurities were more numerous, and not less disgusting.

Mercury, according to poetical mythology, was received into the confidence of the gods for no other reason, than his shrewdness, evinced by repeated acts of dishonesty.* After being admitted to the rank and honors of a deity, Jupiter appointed him his cup bearer, and employed him as the accomplice of his crimes. No description need be given of the character of Bacchus and Venus. The mention of their names, to those whose attention has been in any degree, directed to classical studies, will bring to recollection their moral qualities.

Now, these were among the most common objects of gentile worship. To the honor of these deities, statues and temples were erected. It is natural to suppose, that the service, whether moral or ritual, which was rendered to such gods, would correspond with those moral qualities, for which they had been most distinguished. We should not expect, either that the kind of worship rendered to such deities would contribute to purity of life, or that such purity would be cultivated by their votaries. In regard to both these particulars, facts are precisely as we should anticipate.†

The worship of the ancient heathen was a horrible mixture of folly, lasciviousness, and cruelty.

Nothing could be more ridiculous than many of their rites; nothing more absurd, than the manner in which they sometimes treated their gods. The Abbe Barthelemy, quoting Theocritus, puts the following words into the mouth of Anacharsis. "Having reached the top of mount Lycæus, in Peloponnesus, we were present at some games celebrated in honor of the god Pan. We saw some, who struck the statue of the god with whips. They inflicted this punishment on him, because a

* Anach. III. 35.

† Lardner i. 174, tells of the debauchery of the Egyptian worship. See also its absurdity, as represented by the same learned author.

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hunting, undertaken under his auspices, had not been sufficiently successful to furnish them with a meal."*

The festivals in honor of Bacchus, called Dionysia, were celebrated over all Greece, especially at Athens. This festival it appears, was considered as peculiarly respectable and sacred.† By the return of it were the years numbered. The chief archon had a part in the management of it; and the priests, who officiated on this occasion, were honored with the first seats at the public shows. Whatever these festivals were, therefore, they are not to be considered as exhibiting the character of a few extravagant profligates, but that of every nation or community, into which they were received.

These Bacchanalia, or Dionysia, were it seems of different kinds, such as the greater, the less, etc. In some of them it was usual for the worshippers, in their garments and actions, to imitate the poetical fictions concerning Bacchus; they put on fawn skins, fine linen, and mitres; carried thyrsi, drums, pipes, and flutes; and crowned themselves with garlands of trees, sacred to the god. Some exposed themselves by uncouth dresses, and antic motions. In this manner, persons of both sexes ran about the hills, deserts and other places, wagging their heads, dancing in ridiculous postures, filling the air with hideous noises, and personating men distracted. Nothing could exceed the sensuality, which was allowed on this occasion; revelling and drunkenness were part of the worship, to which they were obligated, in honor of the god.

These impure and infamous celebrations were introduced from Greece into Tuscany, and thence to Rome. At this latter

* Anachar. 3. 68. Julian had sworn in a passion, nunquam se Marti sacra facturum. Augustus, after his fleet had been twice shipwrecked, excluded Neptune from the honor of a public procession. Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, 4. 197. The bad conduct of the gods was openly complained of. Potter's Euripides, Ion, 434. 935. See also the Bacchae. Pentheus is torn to pieces because he would not consent to have the Bacchanalia and all their impurities introduced into his dominions.

† Potter's Greek Antiquities, 1. 411.

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place, the impure actions and indulgences, which accompanied them, became so intolerable, as to call for the interference of the Senate.* The festival was for a while suppressed, but was afterwards re-established.

The Floralia, or games in honor of Flora, are mentioned by Paterculus, and described by Lactantius.† The goddess, in whose honor these games were instituted, according to the last mentioned writer, amassed, while a mortal, a large estate, by a life of abandoned profligacy. This estate she bequeathed at death, to the Roman people. They, in their turn, instituted an annual festival to her honor. What kind of rites would be practised at the annual celebration of such a character, may be sufficiently known, without reading the accounts, transmitted to us from this eloquent father.

Nocturnal festivals in honor of Cotytto the goddess of lewdness, mentioned by Juvenal, were observed, says Apb. Potter, by the Athenians, Corinthians, Chians, Thracians, and others. Sat. ii. 91. Potter's Antiquities, i. 440.

The impurities practised at the Lupercalia, in the worship of Cybele, and in the temples of Venus, at Crete, Corinth, and Babylon, need not, and ought not to be mentioned.

But we are not to suppose, that the ancient heathen worship tended to corrupt, in one particular only, those who engaged in it. Impurity was not the only crime, of which their gods had been guilty; and of course, not the only vice, which their votaries would learn from them.

The dishonesty of Mercury has been mentioned in this lecture. The annual festival of this deity was celebrated at Rome on the fifteenth of May. On which occasion, the merchants, traders, etc. after performing certain ceremonies, prayed that the god would both blot out all the frauds and perjuries, which they had committed already, and enable them again to practise like impositions. Bell's Pantheon.

* Livy, xxxix. 13 et seq.

† Pater. L. I. c. xiv. 8. Lact. de Religione falsa 1. 20. See also Juvenal, 6. 250. Gifford's note.

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Casting but a slight glance on the pagan religion, we are likely to consider it, as exclusively gay, and festive. Increased attention will lead to a different conclusion. It was, in many parts, gay and grossly licentious; but in other parts, it was cruel, ferocious and unrelenting.

A solemnity called Diamastigosis, was observed at Sparta, in honor of Diana. The name is derived from the scourgings, which boys received on the altar of the goddess. The lashes were continued till the blood gushed out. They sometimes ended the life of the wretched sufferer. Diana's priestess was nigh at hand, urging increased severity. Parents were present to exhort their sons to endure the lash with patience and constancy. Those who died by these means, were buried with garlands on their heads, in token of joy and victory, and had the honor of a public funeral. Potter 1. 408. Anach. 11. 271. 320.

We know that the worshippers of Baal, in their extremity, cut themselves with knives. Farmer assigns this reason why idolaters practised all manner of cruelty on themselves and others, in the worship of Diana, Bellona and other deities, that by the sight of their sufferings, these deities might, at length, be induced to pity and spare them.

There is no part of pagan worship, which strikes us with greater horror, than the well known fact of their offering human sacrifices.

This kind of worship appears to have prevailed to very great extent. It was practised by the ancient Persians. During a tempest, as Herodotus informs us,* the Magi offered human victims. We are informed, that Amestris, the wife of Xerxes, buried twelve persons alive as an offering to Pluto, on her own account, that is, as a sacrifice, by which it was designed to procure the favor of the gods for herself. The same Amestris is said to have caused fourteen children of the best families in Persia to be interred alive, as a gratification to the god beneath

* Lib. 7. 191.

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the earth. When the enemy of Xerxes came to a place called the Nine Ways, the Magi took nine of the sons and daughters of the inhabitants, saith the same historian, and buried them alive, as the manner of the Persians is.*

It was the custom of the ancient Scythians to sacrifice every hundredth captive. Having poured libations on their heads, they cut their throats into a vessel, for that purpose. From these human victims, they cut off the right arms close to the shoulder, and threw them up into the air. This ceremony being performed on each victim severally, they depart. The arms remain where they happen to fall; the bodies elsewhere.†

Among the Thracians, a human sacrifice was offered every fifth year, to the god Zamolxis.‡

Our account of this sanguinary worship might be much enlarged on the authority of Herodotus.§

Human sacrifices, says the Abbe Barthelemy, were not unfrequent among the Greeks. They were common in almost every nation. Twelve Trojan youth were sacrificed by Achilles, at the funeral of Patroclus.‖

Leland, quoting from Porphyry, enumerates, among those who sometimes offered human sacrifices, the Lacedæmonians and Athenians.

This mode of worship was early received, and long retained by the Romans. Lactantius mentions the sacrificing of human victims to Saturn, as an ancient rite; informing us, that the sacrifice was not made by immolation at an altar, but by plunging the devoted person from the Milvian bridge into the Tiber.¶ Infants were sacrificed to the same god. Virgil represents Æneas, as sacrificing eight young men to the infernal gods.** Livy in the twenty second book of his history, tells us of four persons, who were buried alive, by way of sacrifice.††

* Lib. 7. 114. † Herod. 4. 62. ‡ Herod. 4. 94.

§ Beloe's Herod. II. 275. III. 376. IV. 100.

‖ Annchar. 1. 383. 2. 321 sc. 3. 67.

¶ Lact. de Religione falsa Lib. 1. 21.

** Æneid. 10. 517. †† XXII. 57.

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Nor does it appear that this practice was abandoned among the Romans, until the beginning of the second century of the christian era. Though condemned by the best among the philosophers, it had not been extirpated. Even at a period later than the second century, all remains of it were not destroyed. Lactantius asserts that even in his time, i. e. in the fourth century, offerings of this kind were not wholly abolished. "Latialis Jupiter etiam nunc sanguine colitur humano."

Among the Carthaginians, these sacrifices were not uncommon. When they were conquered by Agathocles, king of Sicily, thinking that the god was angry with them they sacrificed to him two hundred sons of the nobility.*

Cæsar gives us the following information concerning the worship of the Gauls. When they are afflicted with any dangerous disease,—when they are engaged in war, or exposed to hazard, they either immolate human victims, or make vows to do it; and in these sacrifices they make use of the ministry of the Druids. Others, it appears, formed images of immense magnitude, whose limbs were made hollow by a texture of osiers, into which were thrown living men to be consumed by the fire.† Human sacrifices, as we learn from Tacitus, were offered by the ancient Germans.

To these testimonies, we shall add a small number from the sacred Scriptures. Speaking of the ancient inhabitants of Canaan, the Psalmist asserts, that they sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan.‡ To the same purpose speaks the prophet Jeremiah: They build the high places of Tophet, which is the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire. They build also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire, for burnt offerings unto Baal.§

The account here given of the cruelty and licentiousness,

* Lact. Lib. 1. 21.
† Cæs. Bell. Gall. 6. 15.
‡ Ps. 106: 37.
§ Jer. 7: 31.

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which accompanied the pagan worship, is brief, and might easily be enlarged. The reason why more facts have not been exhibited, and why pagan rites have not been made to appear more infamous and detestable is, that any description of them would be indecent, whatever circumlocutions were resorted to, or how great soever might be our caution in the selection of words.

I would now request your attention to those reflections which naturally result from the facts stated. And,

1. Agreeably to what was observed in the last lecture, we perceive, that no objection can be made to the testimony of the poets, in regard to the history and character of the gods. To persons imbued with those truths, which are derived from the fountain of sacred Scripture, it cannot at first seem credible, that the human understanding should ever be so deeply degraded, as to receive for religious doctrines, the absurdities of poetic mythology. But the fact is, that the legislators, who organized the system of pagan worship, formed it agreeably to that model, which the poets gave.* Whether the poets invented these fictions, or only gave them a more alluring dress, I pretend not to determine, though the latter is probable. All that I would be understood to assert is, that the religion adopted by the mass of the people, was the religion of the poets. This was the religion, which the legislators designed should be believed and maintained. The ceremonies of the established worship were so constructed, as to preserve in the public mind not only the virtues, but the vices of those mortals of either sex whom they denominated gods and goddesses. Arnobius, as quoted by a writer, whose name has been frequently mentioned in this lecture, upbraids the heathen, for "ascribing the most base and unworthy actions to him, whom they described as father of gods and men, the chief god, the thunderer, who shakes heaven with his nod, and to whom they attributed the most divine titles. He thinks, that if they had any regard to

* As to the sincerity with which the heathen worship was maintained, see Blackwell's Life of Homer, 253.

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piety and decency, the public authority ought to interpose, by forbidding such representations. Instead of which they encouraged them and admitted them into their religion; whereas they would punish any man, who should cast such reflections on a senator or magistrate."*

2. Let us for a moment compare the effects, which would naturally result from the worship of such deities, with those, which might be expected from the worship of the true God. To say nothing of such gods, as Bacchus, Venus or Mercury, how was it possible for the votaries of Jupiter to contemplate his character with reverence, or rational affection? What was there to revere in a being, whose passions were more violent, and whose crimes were more numerous than those of human offenders? With what sense of moral obligation could the ancient pagans have gone from Jupiter's temple, where they had been engaged in those rites, which brought his vices to their recollection? Far from blushing at their sensuality, they must have justified it, as we know they did, by the example of the god, whom they worshipped.† "Whenever vice comes to be considered as a divine quality, as well as an act of devotion, or in other words, when it is practised, both in honor and in imitation of the gods, it is hereby authorized and sanctioned; and men must sink into the lowest degeneracy."

On the contrary, when men have been employed in the worship of that Being, whose dwelling is not with flesh;—who is infinitely removed from human passions and human guilt;—whose irresistible power is under the direction of moral purity and infinite wisdom;—who regards with divine indignation, all the workers of iniquity;—and accepts that service only, which proceeds from uprightness and simplicity of heart;—they must perceive that a virtuous life is essential, as well to their safety as their duty. This conviction will be forced upon them, whenever they use a moment's reflection. Accordingly, in a christian country, nothing tends more directly to purify the

* Leland, 1. 177. † Anachar. 2. 255. Div. Legat. 1 153.

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morals of a community, than general attendance on public worship.

Among those who entertain just notions of the Supreme Being, it is a natural sentiment, that divine judgments are to be averted by penitence and reformation. This sentiment appears to have made no part of the pagan creed. If public calamities were felt or threatened, to appease the gods, and avert the impending evil, they had recourse to some trifling ceremony, but not to repentance and a reclaimed life. They might revive ancient rites, or institute new ones; but reformation of morals, says Warburton, was never made part of the State's atonement. The fact was, as Dr. Priestley has remarked, that the heathen religion had nothing to do with morality.*

3. From the facts stated in this lecture, we learn how to estimate a remark, not very unfrequently made, that on supposition, a man is sincere, it is of little importance, what may be his creed. That there were many among the ancient heathen, sincerely attached to the prevailing mythology, it would be unreasonable to doubt. Who can question, that, when the king of Moab took his eldest son, that should have reigned after him and offered him for a burnt offering, he really believed that by such a sacrifice, he should obtain divine aid against Israel? Who can doubt, that when the Greeks were urgent with Agamemnon to immolate his daughter, they sincerely believed, that this sacrifice would procure for their fleet propitious winds? The same kind of sincerity might be possessed by the worshippers of Bacchus, of Venus, or Mercury. But will it hence follow, that a sincere thief, a sincere prostitute, or a sincere drunkard, is quite as deserving a moral character, as he, who, with integrity of heart, worships the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

4. From the representation now given of the worship and gods of the ancient heathen, we perceive that St. Paul had good reason for charging the gentiles with atheism. Having no

* Disc. on Evidences, 58.

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hope, and without God in the world. The words in the Greek are ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κοσμῷ, i. e. atheists in the world.

"It may be justly said," observes Dr. Campbell, "that their sacrifices were not offered to God; for however much they might use the name God, the intention is to be judged of, not by the name, but by the meaning affixed to it. Now such a being as the Eternal, Unoriginated, Immutable Creator, and Ruler of the world, they had not in all their system. For this reason, they are not unjustly called ἄθεοι, i. e. without the knowledge, and consequently the belief and worship of him, who alone is GOD."

It appears indeed, that when Christianity made known such a Being, hostility to his character was openly avowed. Dr. Leland, in his Westminster Lectures, gives us the following very important information. "Whatever the Greeks could not accomplish by the sword, they endeavored to effect by the force of impious language. And such was the madness, with which they were inflamed, that they proposed rewards and honors to such of their poets and sophists, as should write with most wit and elegance, in opposition to the one, true and incorruptible God, from whom descended to mankind the gift of eternal happiness by Jesus Christ."*

I close the present lecture with a single remark, relating not to the ancient gentiles, but directly to ourselves: while professing to know God, may we not in works deny him; being disobedient and to every good work reprobate?

* Christian Observer, Feb. 1811.

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LECTURE XIII.

THE NECESSITY OF REVELATION, AS IT APPEARS FROM THE GODS AND WORSHIP OF MODERN PAGANS.

In the preceding lecture, were considered the character of the heathen gods, and the moral tendency of that worship, which they received.

As the facts then stated were chiefly such as occurred among the Greeks and Romans, the most learned and refined nations of antiquity, it is to be presumed, that should our investigations extend to modern pagans, far inferior to them in mental cultivation, appearances would not be more favorable. Inquiries of this kind will constitute the present lecture. They will relate,

1. To the gods;

2. To the worship and religious ceremonies of modern pagans.

1. We are to inquire concerning the gods, worshipped in those nations where revealed religion is not enjoyed.

As the Hindoo religion is not confined to the vast country of Hindostan, but spreads itself in some form or other, over several divisions of the eastern continent, (Thibet, the Burman Empire, and Siam,) it is peculiarly entitled to our attention. It appears, likewise, to be a religion of very great antiquity. Sir Wm. Jones, as quoted by Dr. Priestley, considers the institutions of Menu, one of their sacred books, as having been written about twelve hundred years before Christ. Their other

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sacred writings, called the Vedas, are said to have been written three centuries earlier.

Through the indefatigable labor of that illustrious scholar, whose name has been mentioned, and many learned coadjutors in India, the information, which we have on the subject of the Hindoo religion, is somewhat extensive, and much to be relied on.

They believe in one Supreme God, who created the world, though not all things pertaining to it. This Supreme Being is said to have created a goddess, called Bawany, who was the mother of three subaltern deities. Brimha, or Bramha, Vishnou, and Sheevah. Brimha was endued with the power of creating the things of this world; Vishnou, with the power of cherishing them; and Sheevah, with the power of restraining and correcting them. Thus Brimha became the creator of man; and in this character, he formed four castes or classes, which are so distinctly preserved among the Hindoos. Besides these deities, they acknowledge a great number of gods and goddesses, with the most noted deities of classic mythology. They have likewise numerous demigods, who are supposed to inhabit the air, the water, and the earth, and in short, the whole world, so that every mountain, river, wood, town, village, etc. has one of these tutelary deities. By nature these demigods are subject to death; but are also supposed to obtain immortality by the use of a certain drink. Encycl. vol. viii. Art. Hindoos. See also Dr. Conie's Sermon, p. 26. Also Nott's Sermon on the Idolatry of the Hindoos, p. 26.

The number of their gods, saith Dr. Priestley,* exceeds that of any other people, that we are acquainted with. "I have often been told," says an American Missionary, who left Bombay, on account of his health, "there are three hundred and thirty millions of gods."†

They make application to different deities, according to their

* Inst. of Moses, 78, 79.

† See also Mr. Hall's letter, Boston Recorder, April, 14, 1818.

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different occasions. In sickness, they apply to one god; on a journey, to another; and when engaged in war, to a third.

"Notwithstanding the general opinion, that Brimha, Vishnou, and Sheevah, had the same origin, and bear the same relation to the Supreme Being, some of the Hindoos attach themselves to one of them; and others, to another; and the generality only worship one of the three." What ideas they have of the moral character of these gods, may be conjectured from the following fact. "They say, that these divine personages quarrelled and fought; that, during the battle, the earth trembled, and the stars fell from the firmament."* From other sources, and those the most authentic, it appears, that the moral character of Hindoo gods is absolutely abominable.

Worship, paid to the souls of the dead, is a great article in the Hindoo system; and is mentioned, we are told, in almost every page of the Institutes of Menu.

All the neighboring nations, whose religions bear some affinity to that of the Hindoos, are polytheists. The Siamese say, that the reign of a deity is limited to a certain number of years; after which, he sinks into eternal repose, and another succeeds him in the government of the universe." †

It appears, that there was, before the Christian era, a sect of philosophers in India, denominated Sammanes. These Dr. Priestley supposes to be the same with those, who are now called Schamans, in Siberia. ‡ In the tenets and practices of the Schamans, saith he, we may see a faint outline of the religion of the Hindoos. They believe in one God, the maker of all things; but they think, that he pays no attention to the affairs

* Nott's Sermon, 79. "It is not to be understood," says the author of this valuable discourse, "that those who worship the gods by means of images, pay, at the same time, an indirect worship to the great Supreme. The worship of the gods is not a mode of worshipping the Supreme, but a substitute for it, designed and suited to accommodate beings actuated by sense and passion, and living in an age of corruption and baseness, p. 48.

† See the drowning of the gods as mentioned in Nott's Sermon, 51.

‡ Inst. of Mos. 105 et seq.

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of men, leaving the government of the world to inferior beings, to whom, therefore, all their devotions are addressed.

Perfectly accordant with this, is the representation of Mr. Nott, lately missionary from this country at Bombay. "It is not to be understood," says he, "that those who worship the gods, by means of images, pay at the same time, an indirect worship to the great Supreme. The worship of their gods is not a mode of worshipping the Supreme, but a substitute for it."*

The Hindoos suppose, not only, that there are superior beings of very different dispositions, some friendly, and others unfriendly to men, but think that the best disposed of them are sometimes partial, obstinate, and vindictive; and, over the malevolent deities, they place one of much superior power whom they call Schaitan. But though he is very wicked, they think it possible to appease him; and therefore to him they address much of their worship.

In Japan, the religion as in India, appears to be polytheism in subordination to theism; i. e. they acknowledge numerous gods; but one is believed to be supreme over the rest. Many of them consider this supreme god, as far above all human adoration; and for this cause, address their devotions to deities of subordinate rank. They are gross idolaters, as will appear from the following testimony of Dr. Thunberg, as quoted by Bigland. "In the midst of their temple, saith he, sat Quanwon, (the name of one of their divinities,) furnished with thirty-six hands. Near him were placed sixteen images about the size of men, but much less than the idol. These occupied a separate room, and partitioned off as it were to themselves. On both sides next to these, stood two rows of gilt idols, each with twenty hands. Afterwards were placed in rows on each side, idols of the size of a man, quite close to each other, the number of which I could not reckon. The whole number of idols in this solemn recess of superstition, is said to be not less than

* Sermon 48. More evidence to this purpose may be found in Robertson's India, 359 etc.

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thirty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-three." Bigland, IV. 395.

It was remarked in the last lecture, that not only departed spirits, but living men have received divine worship. The emperors of Rome were worshipped as gods. In that extensive country called Thibet, lying west of China, we find a whole nation paying divine honors to a living mortal, under the title of the grand Lama. He is the great object of adoration, not only to the inhabitants of Thibet, but to the various tribes of heathen Tartars, who roam through the vast tract of continent, which stretches from the banks of the Wolga to Korea, or the Japan sea.* He is considered by some, as the vicegerent of deity, and by others as Deity himself. "He is never to be seen, but in a secret place of his palace, amidst a great number of lamps, sitting cross legged on a cushion, and adorned all over with gold and precious stones; where, at a distance, they prostrate themselves before him, it not being lawful for any to kiss, even his feet. The orthodox opinion is, that, when the grand Lama seems to die, either of old age or infirmity, his soul, in fact, only quits a crazy habitation to look for another, younger and better; and it is discovered again in the body of some child, by certain tokens known only to the lamas, or priests, in which order he always appears."†

In the Mahratta country, not far from Bombay, divine honors are paid to a god denominated the Deo of Chinchose; i. e. to a boy about twelve years old, in whom Ganesa, the god of prudence, is supposed to have become incarnate. The deity was visited in the year 1809 by Mrs. Graham, whose testimony was confirmed to Mr. Nott, by an eye witness, who accompanied her in the visit, which she describes. Nott's Serm. 71.

It has long since been reported, that in the south of Africa there were whole nations, among whom were to be found no ideas of God or religion. This has been recently confirmed by Mr. Kicherer, who resided as missionary, among the Bosche-

* Goldsmith's Geography. † Encycl. Brit. Art. Lama.

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men. "They have," says he, "no idea of the Supreme Being; consequently they practise no kind of worship."* In the same deplorable ignorance, we find the vast island, or rather continent of New Holland.† In Pelew, there is no appearance of religion of any kind; though they have an idea that the soul survives the body. In Otaheite, they have numerous gods, each family having a guardian spirit, whom they worship. "The religion of the ancient Mexicans seems to have been founded chiefly on fear; the temples being decorated with figures of destructive animals."‡ Their worship appears to have been directed, not to a benevolent, but to a malignant deity, who delighted in destruction. One of their idols was composed of certain seeds, pasted together with human blood. Their principal deities were thirteen in number; but they also acknowledged a variety of local divinities, who presided over the mountains and valleys.§

Of the religion of the Sumatrans, Mr. Marsden, as quoted by Goldsmith, gives the following account. "If, by religion, is meant a public or private worship of any kind, if prayers, processions, meetings, or priests, be necessary to constitute it, these people are totally without religion. They neither worship God, devil, nor idol. They have no word in their language, to express the person of God, except the Allah of the Malays,"‖ which I suppose was introduced by the Mohammedans.

Having briefly considered the character of the gods, worshipped by modern pagans, we are in the second place, to inquire by what kind of services it was attempted to render these deities propitious.¶

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* The Rev. E. Evans, was told that the Hottentots worshipped a little insect. Has not Mr. Kicherer suggested the same. See Recorder, No. 40, vol. 3.

† Pink. 2. 473. ‡ Bigland, v. 439. § Pinkerton.

‖ Goldsmith, 450. The inhabitants of Paraguay appear, says Bigland, to have no ideas of a Supreme Deity; but acknowledge an evil principle, whose malevolence they endeavor to avert, v. 501.

¶ See a very interesting account of the Druses in Clarke's Trav. 251.

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It will not appear upon examination, that, in the religion of modern pagans, there is less, either of the impure or ferocious, than was noticed, as belonging to the ancient heathen worship. Indeed, it must not be forgotten, that the religion of the Hindoos, which in some form or other, has overspread the most populous countries of the east, is of very high antiquity, and bears no inconsiderable resemblance to the mythology of Greece and Italy. Dr. Priestley, speaking of this system, as contained in their sacred books, observes, that it enjoined human sacrifices.* Sir William Jones informs us, that the ancient solemn sacrifice of the Hindoos, was a man, a bull, and a horse.† Human sacrifices were anciently offered by the Chinese. They were likewise offered in the north of Europe.

In Scandinavia they held a festival every ninth month, which lasted nine days; and every day they offered nine living victims, men, or brute animals. But every ninth year, the most solemn sacrifices were offered at Upsal, when the king, the senate, and all the citizens of any distinction attended in person; and they chose among the captives in time of war, and among the slaves in time of peace, nine persons to be sacrificed. But, in times of great calamity, they sacrificed persons of more consequence. The first king of Vermland ‡ was burned in honor of Odin, to put an end to a great dearth. Hacon, king of Norway, offered his son in sacrifice to obtain the victory over his enemy Harold. Aune, king of Sweden, devoted to Odin the blood of his nine sons, to prevail on that god to prolong his life. The ancient history of the North, says Priestley, abounds with similar examples. In confirmation of which, he quotes from Mallet's Northern Antiquities, the following account. In the capital of Denmark, they offered every ninth year, ninety-nine men, with as many horses and dogs. In Iceland, there were two temples,

* Inst. of Moses, 191, 194.

† Asiatic Researches, 1. 265. Dissertation on India, by Sir Wm. Jones and others. 1. 229.

‡ In Sweden.

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in which they offered human victims, and a pit or well, into which they were thrown headlong.*

The missionaries, who were sent to Otaheite in the year 1797, inform us, that the inhabitants of that island, though apparently very devout and strongly attached to their religious rites, are not less savage in their manner of worship, than those barbarians of the north, whom we last mentioned. Human victims are offered at the accession of every new sovereign, by the chiefs of the several districts, in acknowledgment of their subjection; and on many other occasions, which are distinguished for nothing so remarkable as the repetition of this dreadful rite.†

The custom of offering human sacrifices is common to that group, called the Society Islands. It likewise prevails at the Friendly, and Sandwich Islands.‡

Nothing could be more extravagantly ferocious, than the religion of the Mexicans. Fasts, penances, voluntary wounds, and tortures, constituted the essence of their rites. Human sacrifices were deemed the most acceptable; and every captive taken in war, was cruelly tortured and sacrificed. The heart and head were the portion of the gods; while the body was resigned to the captor, who, with his friends, feasted upon it. The austerities and voluntary wounds of the priests, their poisonous ointments, and other abominable rites, evince, that the entire system was the most execrable, that ever appeared on the face of the earth, alike blasphemous to God and pernicious

* The Saxons consecrated to the gods the tythe of their human spoil. Gibb. 4. 391. The Scythians worshipped their tutelary Deity under the symbol of an iron cimetar. Gibbon 6. 43. Conf. Hist. of Phil. 1. 87. Tytler's Elements, 1. 257.

† Among the Pawnees, Indians south of the Missouri, they worship the great star Venus. They offer human sacrifices. Children they transfix on a pole, and thus offer them. Record. vol. iii, 50.

‡ Bigland's View of the world, 5. 439. There is good evidence that human sacrifices, within a few years past, and within a few miles of Bombay, have been repeatedly made, on various occasions, to local deities. Panop. Feb. 1818, p. 79.

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to men." The number of human victims annually offered at Mexico has been thought to be judiciously estimated at two thousand five hundred.

Though it does not appear, so far as I know, that the Hindoos, at present, offer human sacrifices, by immolation at an altar, it is nevertheless true, that until within a few years such victims were offered to the river Ganges. The natives of Hindoostan, says Dr. Buchanan, particularly the inhabitants of Orissa,* and of the eastern parts of Bengal, sometimes make offerings of their children to the goddess Gunga, i. e. to the river Ganges. This sacrifice is made in fulfilment of a vow, offered by parents, apprehensive of not having issue. If, after this vow, they have children, the first born is preserved, till they have a convenient opportunity of returning to the river, at the period of assembling at the holy places. They then take the child with them; and, at the time of bathing, it is encouraged to walk into the deep water, until it is carried away by the stream. If unwilling to go forward, it is pushed off by the parents.

The following account is taken from the Asiatic Annual Register. "So lately as November 1810, some European seamen, belonging to the pilot service of Bengal, being on shore on the island Sagor, witnessed a horrid ceremony. On going on shore, they saw the entrails of a human body, floating on the water, and at the same time, a great number of the natives assembled on the beach, as near as they could conjecture, about three thousand. On asking why so many of the natives were put into the water, they were informed, that the head Fakeer had ordered them thither to be devoured by the sharks, for the prosperity of their respective families. They saw eleven men, women and boys thus destroyed; and it further appeared by other incontestible evidence, that the victims, destroyed in November, amounted to thirty-nine."

* I forbear to give that particular account of the Moloch of Orissa, which has been published by Dr. Buchanan, an eye witness.

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"When a sick person is supposed not to be likely to recover, particularly if he is aged, he is conveyed to the river, in which the lower half of his body is immersed. Water is copiously poured into his mouth; and he seldom survives the operation many hours." There is a striking resemblance between this account, and that which we receive of the same people, from Herodotus. (Herod. Thal. 99. or Beloe's Transl. v. ii. 119.) "If any man among them," says he, "be diseased, his nearest connexions put him to death; alleging in excuse, that sickness would waste and injure his flesh. They pay no regard to his assertions, that he is not really ill; but without the smallest compunction, deprive him of life." The two passages compared, serve to verify a remark of Dr. Robertson, that hundreds and even thousands of years have done little towards changing the Indians, either in their customs or character.

It is not improper here to mention the custom, extensively prevalent in India, of the burning of widows with their deceased husbands. Dr. Buchanan acquiesces in the conclusion, that not less than ten thousand widows perish annually by self-devotement, in the northern provinces of Hindoostan alone.

Dr. Leyden has informed us, that the natives of the interior of Sumatra give this account of themselves, that they frequently eat their own relations, when aged and infirm; and that, not so much to gratify their appetite, as to perform a pious ceremony. Thus, when a man becomes infirm and weary of the world, he is said to invite his own children to eat him, at the season, when salt and limes are cheapest. He then ascends a tree, around which his friends and offspring assemble, and as they shake the tree, join in a funeral dirge, the import of which is, "the season is come; the fruit is ripe; and he must descend." "The victim descends; and those who are nearest and dearest to him deprive him of life, and devour his remains in a solemn banquet." (Chris. Research. 145, quoting Asiatic Res. x. 203.) This strikingly corresponds with the practice of the ancient Indians, as stated by Herodotus; "the more aged among whom

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he asserts, were regularly killed and eaten." (Thalia 99, or vol. i. 213.)

I had occasion to notice in a former lecture, that, in the ancient system of heathen worship, there was a most disgusting mixture of lasciviousness and cruelty. This remark applies in full force to the religion of modern pagans.

In Orissa, a province of Hindoostan, stands the temple of Juggernaut. This idol has been considered as the Moloch of the present age. His temple is a stupendous fabric. As other temples are usually adorned with figures, emblematical of their religion; so Juggernaut has representations, numerous and various, of that vice which constitutes the essence of his worship. The walls and gates are covered with indecent emblems, in massive and durable sculpture. In the worship of this god are chanted songs, the most indecent and licentious. These, say the infatuated devotees, are the delight of the god. To engage in this worship, incredible numbers assemble annually from the various parts of Northern India. The assembly, it appears, consists of many hundred thousands. An image of enormous size is drawn on a car, sixty feet high. Under the wheels of this car, it is common for persons to throw themselves for the purpose of being crushed to death. This god is said to smile, whenever a libation of blood is thus made.*

This account, let it be considered, is given by an eye witness, a man highly respected for piety and literature. Nor have twelve years elapsed, since he was present at this scene of abomination and horror.

Another writer gives a corresponding account, in a spirit equally indignant. "These pagans," says he, "in forming their idols cast away every vestige of beauty, every thing, that by consent of mankind, is supposed to convey pleasing sensations, and in their place, substitute the most extravagant and unnatural deformity, the most loathsome filth, and the most dis-

* Christian Researches, 103. Consult also in the Recorder vol. 3, no. 3, an account from Mag. Prol.

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gusting obscenity. It is not in language to convey an adequate idea of their temples, and idols; and if it were, no purpose could be answered by it, but the excitement of painful and abominable emotions." (Priestley's Inst. of Moses, 227.)

Every pagoda, we are told, has a certain number of prostitutes annexed to it, dedicated to its use, by pompous and solemn ceremonies. In the Deccan, it is customary for parents to dedicate their children to this profession.

In the worship of modern pagans we find not only all that is impure and sanguinary, but the most degrading stupidity. By these institutions, the rational nature of man is debased and outraged. The Sovereign of the universe requires a rational service. The worship of the heathen is strikingly the reverse. "What the Hindoos call prayer, and which they suppose to be so efficacious, bears little or no resemblance to what Jews and Christians signify by that term. It is no proper address to the Supreme Being, expressive of the sentiments of humility, veneration and submission; but the mere repetition of certain words, the pronunciation of which can be supposed to operate only as a charm. The worshippers of Vishnoo, it is said, pretend that his name, though pronounced without any determinate motive, or even in contempt, cannot fail to produce a good effect. This alone they say, has the power of effacing crimes."*

The greatest part of the worship of the Hindoos, it is asserted on the testimony of Pietro della Valle, consists of nothing but music, songs, dances, and in waiting on their gods, as if they were living persons, viz. in presenting them things to eat, washing them, perfuming them, giving them betel leaves, dying them with a peculiar kind of wood, carrying them abroad in processions, etc. Inst. of Mos. 161.

The Schaimans of Siberia, whose religion has been mentioned, pretend, like the ancient Babylonians, to nourish their idols with food. By way of offering them incense, they make a smoke with burning flesh, blood, or boughs of fir and worm-

* Inst. of Moses, 161.

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wood, before them. But when misfortunes befal them, they load them with abuse; sometimes dash them against the ground, throw them into the water, or beat them with rods.*

Belonging to the Hindoo religion are great numbers of devotees, who give themselves up to the most severe abstinence and torture. Some will keep their arms constantly stretched over their heads, till they become quite withered, and incapable of motion. Others keep them crossed over their breasts, during their lives, some chain themselves to trees and particular spots of ground, which they never quit. Dr. Buchanan mentions an enthusiast, whom he saw going on a pilgrimage to Juggernaut, who had to merit the favor of the god, measured the whole way by the length of his body.†

It is related of the ancient inhabitants of the Canary Islands, who worshipped the sun and the stars, that, on solemn festivals, kept in honor of the deity, whom they adored, in a temple seated on the brink of a mountain, they threw themselves down into a vast depth, out of a religious principle, dancing and singing, their priests assuring them, that they should enjoy all sorts of pleasures after a death so meritorious. Miller, as quoted by Leland, ii. 220.

I shall close the lecture with a few remarks on what has preceded.

1. In view of those facts, which have been stated in the preceding lectures, can the necessity of revelation be reasonably denied, or even doubted? The doctrine of the divine existence which lies at the root of all religion, has been either unknown, or so corrupted and perverted, as to be no better than unqualified atheism; and this too, in countries, where the human mind far from being permitted to lie inactive, has erected many beautiful and stupendous monuments to its own praise. So that there is no reason to believe, that the true God would,

* Feronia was plundered by Hannibal on his return from Rome, to avenge on that goddess his late disappointment. Eustace's Class. Tour, 2. 98.

† Christian Researches, 102.

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under any circumstances, have been generally known and worshipped without revelation. Most strikingly true, therefore, is the assertion, made by St. Paul, that the world by wisdom knew not God. It is conceded indeed, that the works of creation, if examined with a fair and impartial mind, are sufficient to indicate the being and perfections of their Author. The invisible things of God may be discovered by the things, that are made. But if these invisible things were not in fact discovered; but the whole world was overspread with gross darkness; and men had such notions concerning religion, as tended to degrade both the heart and the intellect, and to prostrate, rather than to establish moral principle; it follows that a revelation from heaven was inexpressibly important and desirable.

2. The subject corroborates a remark of Dr. Paley, that the effects of revealed religion are not confined to those, who cordially, or even to those who nominally embrace it. There are those, in every Christian country, who do neither the one, nor the other. They are believers neither in heart, nor profession. But though they reject revealed religion, they do not question the existence of God; their notions of him are vastly more correct, than those, either of ancient or modern pagans. Why do they not worship the sun, the stars, the rivers, brute animals, or even vegetables, that are planted and cultivated by their own industry? Why do they not acknowledge, as the rulers of Heaven, those, whose passions and vices once disturbed and polluted the earth? Is it because their intellects are more penetrating and profound, than were those of the Greeks, Egyptians, Phenicians, and Chaldeans? No; but because they have been better instructed by that very religion, which they deny, and would gladly subvert. It is because some rays of celestial truth have fallen upon their understandings, notwithstanding the caution, which has been used to prevent a thorough illumination.

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LECTURE XIV.

OPINIONS OF HEATHEN, ANCIENT AND MODERN, AS TO THE SOUL'S IMMORTALITY.

THAT existence is not terminated by death, but that the soul survives the body, appears to have been a sentiment extensively diffused and generally admitted among pagan nations. This remark is applicable not less to heathen of ancient than of modern times. Why then, it may be asked, was it necessary that the doctrine of immortality should receive additional light by Jesus Christ in the Gospel? I answer,

For three reasons:

1. Though the doctrine of a future state was general among the ancient heathen, it was by no means universal. Socrates is represented in the Phaedon of Plato, as saying, "Almost every body fancies, that when the soul parts from the body, it is no more; it dies along with it. In the very moment of parting, it vanishes like a vapor of smoke, which flies off, and disperses, and has no existence." This testimony is the more important, as it is contained in a work designed expressly to prove the opposite doctrine.

Polybius complains of the general profligacy and want of integrity, which in his day, prevailed among the Greeks, and attributes it to the national rulers, who had encouraged the multitude to despise the terrors of a future state.

It will not perhaps be thought improper to introduce the following passage from Roman history, although it may have been repeatedly brought forward for a similar purpose.

In the speech which Cæsar delivered in a full Senate on occasion of Cataline's conspiracy, he endeavors to dissuade

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them from passing a sentence of death on the conspirators, by this argument, that death would be no punishment, as they who were in favor of that sentence, intended it should be; assigning for a reason, that after death, there is neither enjoyment nor suffering; but that death is to all mortals, the end of evils.*

We cannot doubt, that he well understood the character of those to whom he was speaking. But if we had any doubts of this, they would be removed, by observing that this open avowal of infidelity, did not occasion the least surprise; those who replied, made no remarks, as if it were a novelty. Cicero answered coolly, that their ancestors had supposed it necessary to the public good, that the vicious should be deterred from crimes, by the fear of something after death.† The same illustrious author informs us in another place, how generally the ancient belief as to infernal regions of reward and punishment, was in his time discarded.‡

The contempt in which this doctrine was held even by the vulgar in the days of Juvenal, is strongly represented in his second satire.

"Esse aliquos manes, et subterranea regna,
Et centum, et Stygio ranas in gurgite nigras,
Atque una transire vadum tot millia cymba,
Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum ære levantur."

"That angry justice formed a dreadful hell,
That ghosts in subterranean regions dwell,
That hateful Styx his muddy current rolls,
And Charon ferries o'er unbodied souls,
Are now as tales, or idle fables prized,
By children question'd, and by men despised." *Gifford.*

* Eam cuncta mortalium mala dissolvere; ultra neque curæ, neque gaudio locum esse. Sallust. Cat. § 1.

† Apud inferos ejusmodi quædam illi antiqui supplicia impiis constituta esse voluerunt. 4 Orat. in Catalinam. See Timæus in life of Homer, 220.

‡ Quæ anus tam excors inveniri potest, quæ illa, quæ quondam credebantur, apud inferos portenta extimescat? Cic. de Nat. Deor. L. ii. c. 2. Tusc. L. i. 15.

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It may be thought, that the sentiment here conveyed, is contradicted by the same author, in his 13th satire, which portrays in very lively colors, the terrors of a guilty conscience, and represents the wicked as fearing punishment from an avenging hand.

To this I reply, that those fears relate to this life, and are in no degree founded on an expectation of punishment beyond the grave. The guilty person turns pale, when it thunders, and trembles at the tempest, not because he expects a future life, but fears that offended Jove will terminate the present.

The truth of these remarks will be more apparent by examining the story of the dishonest Spartan, mentioned in this 13th satire; so likewise in the fable by Prodicus, concerning Virtue and Pleasure, transmitted by Xenophon, the rewards of virtue are fame on earth, but nothing in heaven.*

That there was prevailing at Athens, at the time of the great plague, little or no belief in a future moral retribution, appears from facts, stated by Thucydides in his account of that calamity. As the danger of death increased, crimes were augmented. "Every one was now more easily induced to do that, which for decency's sake they did only covertly before. They saw the strange mutability of outward condition, so that they thought it prudent to catch hold of speedy enjoyments and quick gusts of pleasure, persuaded that their bodies and their wealth might be their own merely for a day. Reverence for the gods, or for the laws of society, laid no restraints upon them, either judging that piety, or impiety, were things indifferent, since they saw, that all men perished alike; or throwing away every apprehension of being called to an account for their enormities, since justice might be prevented by death; or rather as the heaviest judgment, to which man could be doomed, was already hanging over their heads, snatching this interval of pleasure before it fell."

Proofs to the same purpose might be considerably multi-

* Xenophon. Mem. Soc. 2. 1.

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plied; but these are sufficient, it is believed to show, that at the times, to which they relate, the doctrine of a future life was by no means universal either in Greece or Rome.

Nor, should we direct our attention to modern pagans, would the case appear different.

Of the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands, Col. Symes observes: "It is not known that they have any idea of a future state;" though he subjoins, "This may possibly arise from our imperfect means of discovering their opinions."*

On the mountains, which separate Arracan from Ava, the same author found a harmless, untaught race of men, from the name of their country called Kayners. This people have no idea of a place of future reward and punishment.

The inhabitants of the Poggy Islands, lying off Sumatra, as we are informed by the Asiatic Researches, "do not appear to have the most distant idea of a future state of rewards and punishment."† Mr. Campbell, who recently travelled in the southern parts of Africa, found tribes of the natives, who believe the soul and body perish at the same time.‡ The same sentiment appears to prevail among the inhabitants of the country, contiguous to Nootka Sound.§

2. Though, notwithstanding these exceptions, there has generally prevailed among the heathen, both of ancient and modern times, some belief, that death does not terminate human existence, the doctrine of immortality seems never to have been established among them, on any rational grounds. It was probably first communicated to men by revelation, and cherished by the magistrate, as an important auxiliary to civil government. But it was not received, either as the result of revelation, or reason, but of ancient tradition, the origin of which was unknown.

3. Another most important reason, why the doctrine of im-

* Symes's Embassy to China, p. 133. † Vol. 6. p. 86.

‡ Campbell's Travels, 233, 284, 291, 339.

§ Analyt. Rev. for Feb. 1817, p. 131.

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mortality needed illumination, was, that the ideas of those, who believed it, were irrational, ill defined, or inconsistent with a moral retribution.

There appears to be no other way of ascertaining what ideas as to a future state, prevailed among the pagan vulgar, than by attending to what the poets have left us on this subject. "We cannot," says the learned author of the Intellectual System, in words quoted in a former lecture, "make a better judgment concerning the generality and bulk of the ancient pagans, than from the poets and mythologists, who were the chief instructors of them." Their writings were considered among the Greeks, as being in no very inferior sense, the result of inspiration.* If such were their regard for the poets in general, what must have been their veneration for Homer, whose verses, to use the language of an animated writer, resounded through all Greece; and whose superiority was so universally acknowledged, that no one was more jealous of his pre-eminence, than of the sun by which the world is enlightened.† This poet has described the region of departed souls. Is the description such as reason approves? Is it such as to supersede all necessity of light from heaven?

What can be more absurd, than that vast crowds of unbodied spirits should rush around the sacrifice, which Ulysses had offered, eager to taste the blood which was flowing from it? What indeed, can be more full of gloom, and darkness, and horror, than the whole scene which the poet describes? In his subterranean world, we look in vain for any blissful regions; we see no calm and joyous retreats, where virtuous souls receive divine light, and contemplate the purity and wisdom of God. Those who, in heathen estimation, had been the fairest candidates for celestial glory, were found, even in this state of retribution, agitated with all the fury of mortal passions; sullen and gloomy in their confinement, dissatisfied with the change,

* Leland Nec. of Rev. 1. 162. Farmer on Worship of Human Spirits, p. 288.

† Anachar. 1. 42.

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through which they had passed. Achilles, though elevated far above vulgar shades, indignantly exclaims in answer to the gratulation of Ulysses,

> Think not death a theme
> Of consolation; I had rather live,
> The servile hind for hire, and eat the bread
> Of some man, scantily himself sustain'd,
> Than sovereign empire hold o'er all the shades.—*Cowper.**

If in describing the same general objects, the Roman poet has not overspread the whole with equal gloom and horror; if he has assigned to virtuous souls spacious fields, lucid and tranquil skies; to say nothing of the dog, the barge, and the infernal river, how far beneath the desires of immortal souls are the leisure, the conflicts, and pastimes of the Elysian fields!† It has almost the appearance of profaneness, to compare this with the Christian paradise. Did not the subject require it, I should need an apology perhaps for introducing in such a connexion, the account, which writers truly inspired have given us of the condition and employment of saints in light. "Ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant."‡

To those who are inclined to think, that the poetical account of the infernal kingdom is too grossly absurd to have been credited even by the vulgar, it may be sufficient to answer, that Plato represents even Socrates, as discoursing in the most solemn hours of his life, i. e. just before his execution, concerning the state of departed souls, in a way, which is but little different from the description of the poets. He speaks particularly of the Acherusian Lake, the barges, Cocytus, and Phlegethon; adding, "No man of sense can pretend to assure

* Od. II. 486. Confer. Farmer on Worship of Human Spirits, 450.
† Æneid, 6. 637. ‡ Heb. 12:22.

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you, that all these things are just as you have heard. But all thinking men will be positive, that the state of the soul, and the place of its abode after death, is absolutely such as I represent it, or at least very near it, provided the soul be immortal." (See Phædon 114. d.)

Another reason why the ancient heathen needed additional light on the subject of immortality, comprehending a retribution, is, that from the nature of their religion, they have no correct standard of moral virtue. In proportion as they believed the current theology concerning a future state, they must have believed the common fables as to the character of their deities; as to their origin, passions, disappointments, amours and contentions. How could they consistently expect reward from the gods, for moral qualities, which the latter did not possess; or punishment for vices, which were as common in heaven, as they were upon earth?

Those among the modern pagans, who believe in the doctrine of a future state, entertain sentiments on the subject, which are extremely confused, and inconsistent.

Although among the inhabitants of New Holland, no traces of religion are perceived; yet they appear to have some faint idea of a future existence, and think, that after death, they shall return to the clouds, whence they originally fell. (Bigland, iv. 414.) The inhabitants of the Pelew Islands entertain sentiments not essentially different from these. (Pinkerton ii. 488.)

The Chinese have some idea of a personal existence hereafter;* yet is this perfectly inconsistent with their belief, that the soul is part of Deity, and at death is absorbed in him again. Indeed, we are told by Sir George Staunton, that "few of the Chinese carry the objects, to be obtained by their devotion, beyond the benefits of this life." (Staunton's Emb. to China, ii. 273.)

The opinion that the soul is part of God, and will be absorbed

* Barrow's Travels in China, 458.

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in him again, which was derived from the Greek philosophy, seems now extensively prevalent in the East.

The general opinion of the Ingrians is, that the dead continue to live in the subterranean world, in the same manner as they did on the surface of the earth; and that the grave is little more than a change of habitation.* For this reason they bury their money, that they may make use of it in the world to come. (Goldsmith's Geography.)

The following account is given of the Kamtchadales. "Men, they believe to be a compound of soul and body; and that immediately after death, the soul passes into another state of existence; which however, most of them think at best a very uncomfortable one, and therefore they have great dread of death. But others expect to go into a better state, and one that will abound in sensual gratifications; and these sometimes put an end to their lives with much unconcern. Some also order their bodies to be burnt, as a means of purifying them, and thereby securing them from the persecution of subterranean spirits. For they suppose all the dead to be in a place under ground.

Though they do not think the soul to be a solid substance, they think that its employments, and enjoyments too, in a future state, will be similar to those of this; and therefore they bury with them cattle and utensils of various kinds, whatever has been of use to them here." (Inst. of Mos. 109.)

The New Zealanders believe that the soul, as soon as it is separated from the body, is engaged in war. (Chh. Miss. Mag. Aug. 1817, p. 346.)

From the view which has been taken of pagan sentiments on the doctrine of a future life, it will not be denied, I suppose, that further instruction from some source or other, was much needed. But might not this darkness, however gross and extensive, have been sufficiently dispelled by the light of philosophy? This question seems to be answered by some of the facts now exhibited. The powers of philosophy have been tried. The

* Farmer's Wor. of Hum. Spir. 421.

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most penetrating and soaring intellects were employed on this very subject. Still the darkness remained.

One reason why the philosophers of antiquity could not render clear the doctrine of immortality, was that many of them did in no sense believe it. (Farmer on Worship of Human Spir. 296.) By four whole sects, according to Bishop Warburton, it was openly denied.*

Whether Aristotle is to be ranked among them, or not, remains uncertain. "Nothing is to be met with in his writings," says Dr. Enfield, "which determines, whether he thought the soul of man mortal or immortal." (Hist. of Philosophy, 1. 285.)

Previously to forming any estimate of the sentiments, prevailing in the philosophic schools, on the doctrine of a future state, it seems necessary to make the following remarks.

We are not to conclude, that every one who spoke in elevated language concerning the immortality or divinity of the soul, really believed in an individual personal existence after death, or in any retribution whatever. The soul may exist after death without being rewarded or punished. And among those philosophers, who believed that the soul survives the body, it was a common sentiment, that human souls are parts of the divinity, and will be absorbed in him again. Dr. Cudworth, speaking of the Stoics, observes, that they considered "reason as nothing else but part of the divine spirit, immerged into a human body, so that these human souls were to them, no other than certain parts of God, or discerptions or avulsions from him." This sentiment is known not to have been peculiar to the Stoics, but generally to have prevailed among the ancients.† A similar idea prevailed over all the East. (Priestley's Instit. of Moses, 50, 52. See also Barrow's China, 458.) But when the soul is absorbed in Deity, it obviously ceases to exist as an individual, and is therefore incapable either of reward or punishment.

* Div. Leg. 2. 109. The Cyrenaic, Cynic, Democritic and Epicurean.

† Intel. System, 1.235. Enfield's Hist. 1. 54, 341. Divine Legation, 2. 199, 205. Ryan's Effects of Rev. 18. Gibbon's Decline and Fall, 2. 294.

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It was justly observed by Madame de Stael, that "such an immortality looks terribly like death." It is true that some did not believe that this absorption immediately followed death; and supposed that the immediate space was passed in something like a retribution.

Further, those, who believed the soul immortal, likewise believed it eternal. This, by the author of the Intellectual System, is expressed in very forcible language. "Neither were there ever any of the ancients before Christianity, that held the soul's future permanency, who did not likewise hold its preexistence." (Int. Sys. 1. 13.) Now it is apparent, at first sight, that the two opinions last mentioned, are well consistent with each other, but are alike unfavorable to the most correct views of a future state of reward and punishment. For if we existed before this life, and yet retain no remembrance of it, it cannot be supposed, that after this life, we shall have any remembrance of the present. By consequence, should we be happy or miserable, we shall never know, for what we are punished or rewarded.

Again, there is peculiar difficulty in ascertaining what opinions, relating to the soul, the ancient philosophers did entertain; as it appears to be a point well established, that they avowedly taught one set of opinions to the vulgar, and advocated a very different system in their own circles.*

All these remarks it would seem, are applicable to Pythagoras. He held, indeed, that the soul made various transmigrations, before it was absorbed in the divine nature. (Enfield, 1. 397.) "But these successive transitions of the soul into other bodies," says the author of the Divine Legation of Moses, "were physical, necessary and exclusive of all moral considerations whatever." (Div. Legat. 2. 144.) We cannot, says Dr. Leland, lay any stress on the doctrine which he publicly taught, because he made no scruple of imposing on the people, things which he himself could not but know to be false.

* Leland 1. 261. 2. 343. Div. Legat. 2. 127. 143. Anarch. 3. 254, 459. Stanley's Lives, 422.

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If there was ever a person, not enlightened by revelation, who had clear and deep views of a future state, that person appears to have been Socrates. That the doctrine had a strong, practical influence on him, is beyond reasonable doubt. But was even Socrates able to place the doctrine of a retribution in a clear light?

1. Though he believed in the future existence of the soul, he did this on such a foundation, if it be rightly represented in the Phædon, as no Christian philosopher, it is presumed, would consider as adequate to support the superstructure.

2. He believed in the pre-existence of the soul, as well as in its future existence, and therefore could not, for the reason already assigned, have very correct views of reward and punishment. Hindoos have the same belief. (Inst. of Moses, 261.)

3. Though he believed the soul to be immortal, it was a subject, on which he made no pretensions to certainty. The conclusion of his defence before his judges, is well known: "It is true, we must retire to our respective offices, you to live, and I to die. But whether you or I are going on the better expedition, is known to God only." (Apol. of Socrates, 28. 45. 47.) But even if Socrates were convinced, it is evident that his disciples were not before, nor fully even at their last conversation. This shows that he was no adequate guide.

The Stoics, agreeably to the observations already made, taught that the soul of man, being of a divine nature, would either at death, or after some indefinite changes and agitations, again be united to the first principle, even God, and thus lose its individual existence.* How little practical use they made of the doctrine, appears from this, that in the Enchridion of Epictetus, where so many arguments are used in favor of contentment, and submission to divine providence, no arguments are drawn, no consolations are suggested from belief in a future and immortal life.†

* Enfield's Hist. 1. 342.

† Warburton says they denied it, 11. 160.

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Cicero, it is well known, has expressed very elevated sentiments concerning the nature and powers of the human soul. He has professedly discussed the great subject of its immortality. But notwithstanding the sublime language, and fine reasoning, which he has employed on the subject, it is far from being a settled point, that he believed the doctrine.* In his epistles, which one would suppose likely to convey his real sentiments, are several passages, in which this doctrine is plainly denied. (Ep. L. v. 21. vi. 3. vi. 21.) However this be, a writer, who expresses himself on different occasions so variously, that those who have studied his works with most assiduity, have not been able to ascertain his real sentiments, is surely not to be considered an adequate guide to others. His own uncertainty is acknowledged in very strong terms, even in that very work, whose object it is to decide this great controversy. (Locke, ii. 323.) After mentioning a variety of opinions concerning the soul, he says, "Which of these opinions is true, some god must determine. Which is most probable, is a great question." (Tusc. Quest. L. 1. 9.) We may add to this, that whatever was the opinion of Cicero himself, on this subject, he represents the doctrine of those who deny the soul's immortality as more generally received; not by Epicureans alone, but by learned men in general. "Catervae veniunt contradicentium non solum Epicureorum, sed nescio quo modo doctissimus quisque contemnit."

Tacitus, who may, perhaps, be ranked with philosophers as well as historians, though he wrote after the Christian doctrine of immortality had made extensive progress, speaks on the subject in the most doubtful terms. Contemplating the decease of Agricola, his father-in-law, for whom he appears to have entertained no ordinary degree of respect and affection, his mind recurs very naturally to the doctrine of a future state, which he speaks of as merely possible, "si quis piorum manibus locus;

* See Cicero's arguments, Tusc. Quaest. Lib. 1. 23. Fam. Epist. 5: 21. 6: 3. 6: 21.

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si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguuntur magnae animae." (Vita Agricolae.)

Pliny, the celebrated naturalist, in very strong terms disavows all belief in a life to come, "All men, (says he,) are in the same condition after their last day, as before their first, nor have they any more sense, either in body or soul, after they are dead, than they had before they were born." Opinions of a contrary nature, he denominates, "childish and senseless fictions of mortals, who are ambitious of a never ending existence." (Nat. Hist. L. vii. cap. 55.)

"As to Varro," says Dr. Ireland, "he is utterly silent as to the existence of a future state. Man, mortal man, is the beginning and end of his philosophy. To discover the art by which common life may be best conducted, is all his concern—the object of all his virtue. He never turned his views towards another world for the happiness which he sought. And we must conclude concerning a genius, distinguished at Rome by his capacity of research, his depth of penetration, his strong judgment, and extensive learning, that he indulged no hope of immortality, and that, to his eyes, futurity was "one universal blank."

From what has been said, we are now to make a few practical remarks. And,

1. We perceive the immense value of the Christian religion.

Had revelation assured us of nothing but a future state of reward and punishment, it would even then have been a gift, not unworthy of divine munificence. This point, so important to the hopes and happiness of man, we are confident, would never, merely by the efforts of human reason, have been established. There is no ground for believing, that the human understanding ever would have accomplished what had been for thousands of years attempted without success. Never was experiment more fairly or extensively made. To establish, on rational grounds, the doctrine of immortality, was an affair, in which all men were equally interested. No subject could have been more popular, or have received more general attention.

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Not only was the matter a long time under examination, but in conducting this examination were employed the most profound and soaring intellects; such as probably neither have been, nor ever will be excelled. The result was, that these very philosophers had less belief in the soul's immortality, than the vulgar, who yielded to the current opinions, however absurd. But the Gospel does vastly more, than merely to settle the controversy concerning the soul's surviving the body. It leads to the most rational views of moral obligation; it represents the divine law as perfect, unyielding, and universal; and by consequence, that depraved beings can obtain none but a gratuitous justification. It not only reveals an economy of mercy, but specifies the conditions, on which mercy may be obtained. It attributes that whole system of measures, which have been adopted for human salvation, to the intervention and sufferings of that august personage, in whom dwelt the fulness of Deity.

From the facts, which have now been stated, it appears, that Christians of ordinary abilities and information, have not only a more established belief in a future state, than uninspired philosophy could impart; but far more distinct, consistent, and rational views on the subject.

2. Our condition, as moral agents in a state of trial, is materially different from that of the heathen. All beyond the grave was to them peculiarly a land of darkness and shadows. All was obscure and fleeting. Nothing was well established, or well defined. If the soul were not extinguished by death, they knew nothing of its destiny;—whether it would pass into the bodies of various animals;—how long these transitions might continue;—or whether the soul, as a distinct agent, would ever become stationary. Without discarding the whole system of pagan mythology, they could not be ascertained, even should there be a retribution, by what law its decisions would be regulated.

Upon us, on the contrary, so copious a flood of light hath burst from that world, which was otherwise concealed, as to leave all terrestrial objects scarcely distinguishable. If Christianity be true, the present life is nothing, and that which suc-

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ceeds is every thing. Whether we cast our eyes to the heavens above, or look on the earth beneath, nothing imperishable is presented to our view, but human beings. All the monuments of human art shall crumble to ruins,—the earth itself shall wax old as a garment,—"all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down, as a leaf falleth off from the vine, and the falling fig from the fig tree." But the human soul is neither annihilated nor impaired by all the changes of the material universe. It will exist with all its powers of acting, of enjoying, and suffering. It will forever advance in knowledge, glory, and moral excellence, or sink in darkness, pollution, and misery. That intellectual spark, which our Creator hath placed within us, will soon kindle into the clear and resplendent glow of the seraph, or into those flames of hatred, malice, and rage, that will eternally torment the reprobate. With such a belief, and with such expectations, our responsibility must be inexpressibly great; and in the day of final judgment, the impenitent believer in revealed religion will have occasion to envy the milder doom of pagan sinners.

Finally, if so wide is the distinction between the religion of Christ and religion of nature, (as the latter has been understood both by ancient and modern pagans;) and, if it has been found after a long and extensive experiment, that without divine revelation, the doctrine of immortality and a retribution is never likely to be made known, it is a duty imperiously demanded of Christians to communicate their religion to the heathen. If talents and learning are well employed, as doubtless they are, in collating manuscripts and versions, so that, if possible, no jot nor tittle, may be taken from the word of God, or added to it; how undeniably commendable are their labors, who at every personal hazard, preach among the gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ! If, to preserve, restore, or expunge a single sentence, agreeably to the best evidence, that may be obtained, is an object, deserving severe and long continued scrutiny;

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how vast, how noble is the object of communicating to millions, essentially ignorant and degraded by vice, not a few sentences only, but the whole volume of divine truth!

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LECTURE XV.

HEATHEN MORALS, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE ANCIENTS

Having, in preceding lectures, considered the character of heathen gods, and the manner in which they were worshipped, the present will consist of inquiries into the state of pagan morals.

Though men are often censured, with justice, for rashness and want of forethought, there are none, it is believed, from whose calculation futurity is wholly excluded. All persons abstain from many actions, which they would perform, were not the consequences forseen, or apprehended to be injurious. To those, on whom our happiness is known to depend, we are cautious not to give offence. Religion of every kind recognizes the existence of an invisible power, whether this power is possessed by one, or distributed among many. On this power it represents man as dependent, not only for his present being and prosperity, but for happiness after death, should the soul survive the body. No other hopes or fears seem calculaculated to produce effects so important, as those which result from religion.

So long as human creatures give no offence to that Supreme Power on which they depend, no evil is thence to be apprehended. But, when offence is given, methods of making known his displeasure will not be wanting. Nothing, therefore, can be more reasonable than the fears and hopes, which religion inspires. Nothing can be better founded, than the expectation, that the Deity will cause us to feel the effect, either of his approbation or displeasure. Now, it is very obvious,

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that the moral effect of religion will depend on the requirements, and by consequence, on the character of that Power, which is the object of worship. If uprightness, benevolence and purity, are attributes of God, the unjust, malevolent, and impure, have every thing to apprehend. But if, on the contrary, the divine attributes are caprice, jealousy, lust, and revenge, it is evident, that the good have nothing to hope, nor the bad to fear. Neither the belief nor worship of such a God, can have any auspicious influence on moral deportment. But, if in addition to this, the rites, prescribed in his worship, be such as to fix in the mind his bad qualities,—or such, that the performance of them implies immorality in his votaries, his religion will be at open war fare with good morals, and might be advantageously exchanged even for atheism itself. Considering the character of heathen gods and heathen rites, it could scarcely be doubted, even were the facts unknown, that deep corruption of morals would be the result. Their very religion, we have seen required them to be immoral. We are not, however to conclude, that all parts of their religion conspired to produce the same effects on the community. In this religion were recognized a future state and a retribution. Those who were guilty of great crimes, such as murder, adultery, and gross injustice, were threatened with a place in Tartarus; there to experience eternal punishment. The truth seems to be, that there was no more consistency in the duties, which their religion required, than there was in the representations, which it made of invisible powers. It exhibited the gods themselves as the perpetrators of crimes. It threatened at the same time, eternal punishment to human offenders. Viewed in some points of light, its tendency was to discountenance crimes; in others, to encourage them, and embolden the guilty. It is impossible to exonerate Virgil from this charge of inconsistency. In the 6th book of the Æneid, he paints in lively colors the torments, endured by criminal ghosts in the infernal abodes. On another occasion, he mentions *rapti Ganymedis honores*, alluding to a crime in Jupiter, the object of their su-

* Æneid 6. 608.

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preme adoration, more detestable, than most of those offences for which mortals in Tartarus are made to endure eternal pains. That neither the poetic, nor any other doctrine of a future state was very generally received, in the advanced periods of the Greek or Roman governments, has been already shown. But even if it had been believed, as understood among the ancient pagans, it would have made but feeble resistance to the inflamed passions of men, excited and sanctioned as they were, by the licentiousness of the gods.

I shall now briefly set before you some facts, indicating the state of morals, as well in those nations, where the intellectual powers of man received their highest polish, as among those of less refinement.

1. We notice the inhuman custom of exposing infants. In Greece, the father had the right of pronouncing on the life or death of his children. On their birth they were laid at his feet; and if he took them in his arms they were saved. When he was not wealthy enough to bring them up, or when he despaired of being able to correct certain defects in their conformation he turned aside his eyes, and they were instantly carried off to be exposed, or put to death. The laws forbade this barbarity at Thebes, but authorized, or tolerated it throughout almost all the rest of Greece.*

Leland asserts, on the authority of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, that Romulus obliged the Romans to bring up all their male children, and the oldest of the females. They were allowed therefore, to destroy all the female children but the eldest. There is a scene in one of the comedies of Terence, which has been noticed by Warburton, indicating a state of public feeling, corresponding with the spirit of this law. Chremes is represented as enraged at his wife, whom he had commanded to expose a new born daughter, for having entrusted that office to another, in consequence of which the infant escapes. Of those persons, in whom the remains of natural instinct

* Anarch. 2. 59.

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remonstrate against such barbarity, he speaks, as ignorant of what is right, and good and just. These sentiments, in the play of a favorite author, were publicly uttered on the Roman theatre.

This horrid practice of exposing infants, says a learned author,* was universal. This crime was so common among the Arabians, that Mohammed found it necessary to exact an oath of the Arabian women, not to destroy their children.

Nothing more clearly shows the degree, to which the best and tenderest feelings of our nature may, by the influence of custom and vice, be subdued. In all these instances, the mother's assent to the sacrifice of her infant either is obtained, or it is not. If it is obtained,—if maternal affection can be so smothered or extinguished, it is then only, when moral depravity has cast its shadows of deepest horror. But if the sacrifice is made without this consent, the father in demanding it, is pre-eminently cruel. He triumphs at once over two objects, more calculated, than all others on earth, to excite compassion.

2. The feelings displayed in war, and the treatment, which enemies and prisoners received, evince a very corrupt state of morals in those countries, where revealed religion has not been enjoyed. Homer has doubtless given to the heroes of the Iliad such characters, as were considered honorable and becoming to warriors, in those ages, in which these heroes are supposed to have flourished. In many of these, we find unmixed ferocity, and a thirst for revenge, which nothing can satiate. "Why so tender hearted?" says Agamemnon to Menelaus, seeing him hesitate, while a Trojan of high rank, who had the misfortune to be disabled by being thrown from his chariot, was begging his life. "Are you and your house so beholden to the Trojans? Let not one of them escape destruction from your hands; no, not the child within his mother's womb. Let all perish unmourned; let not a vestige of them be seen remaining." It is added by Mitford, whose words I have used, "that the

* Warb. Div. Legat. 1. 257.

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poet gives the sanction of his own approbation, to this inhumanity in a prince, by no means generally characterized as inhuman."*

Patroclus, the friend of Achilles, insults with vulgar wit and malignity, the dying charioteer of Hector.† Yet this same friend of Achilles, is, on many occasions, denominated the mild Patroclus. The same spirit of revenge was afterwards exhibited by Hector. When he had killed Patroclus, and stripped him of his rich armor, he postponed the most pressing and most important concerns, equally his own and his country's, to the gratification of a weak revenge; "losing sight of all the greater objects of the battle, while he struggled for the naked corse, with intention to complete its disgrace by giving it to be devoured by Trojan dogs; and to make his vengeance lasting, by depriving it of those funeral rites, which, in the opinion of the times, were necessary to the repose of souls after death."

Modern nations have set some bounds to the licentiousness of war. To take the life of a suppliant enemy; especially to do this for the avowed purpose of satiating revenge, would be thought among modern Christian nations, to be a flagrant violation of the laws of liberal warfare. But Homer ascribes to his most illustrious characters a deportment, more criminal than this. The vengeance of Hector follows not a suppliant, but a slain enemy. It has for its object, not the body alone, which is incapable of suffering, but that immortal part, which survives the body.

The barbarous custom of denying burial to enemies, slain in battle, appears indeed to have been confined to the earlier Greeks. At a period so late as the Peloponnesian war, such liberty was never, I believe, denied. Though it is remarked by Mitford, whose opinion on any subject of Grecian history is entitled to high regard, that morality was not better understood, in the days of Xenophon, and Plato, than in the time of Homer.

The treatment, which captives received from their conquerors

* Mitford, 1. 189. † H. 16. 745.

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among the ancient Greeks, deserves our notice. These, (says one of the personages of the Iliad,) are the evils which follow the capture of a town. "The men are killed; the city is burnt to the ground; the women and children of all ranks, are carried off for slaves."*

The parting of Hector and Andromache has always, I believe, been considered as the most tender and affecting scene in the whole poem. In that interview, nothing occurred by which the heart is more powerfully affected than the prospect of those sufferings and indignities, which Andromache was to incur, after her hero should be slain. This prospect was not represented to his mind by the spirit of prophecy, but by his knowledge of the treatment, which captives usually received. Nor did he expect any alleviation in her case, on account of her high connexions or noble descent; but looked forward to the time, when she would be employed in menial offices, the slave of a foreign mistress.

> ———Thy griefs I dread;
> I see thee, trembling, weeping captive led!
> To bear the victor's hard commands, and bring
> The weight of waters from Hyperia's spring,
> There, while you groan beneath the load of life,
> They cry, Behold the mighty Hector's wife!"
>
> *Pope.*

At a period so late as that of the Peloponnesian war, scarcely any thing could exceed the cruelty endured not only by captured cities, but by those which surrendered. Of this the Melians afford us a remarkable instance.† "The Athenians," says Mitford, commenting on these facts, "had no pretence for any command over this people, but that they were stronger. Connected by blood, by habit, and by their form of government with Lacedaemon, those islanders had been nevertheless cautiously inoffensive to Athens, till forced to become enemies. The punishment for this involuntary act, was to have their adult

* Iliad, 9. 590.

† Thucyd. 1. 262. 2. 82.

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males put to death, and the women and children of all ranks sold for slaves." In the conference, which previously occurred between the Melians and ambassadors from Athens, the latter avowed that they were influenced by a consciousness of power, rather than by any regard to justice. "In all human competitions," said they, "equal wants alone produce equitable determinations."* It is remarkable, that this event occurred at a time, when those studies, and those arts, which are supposed to soften or subdue the rougher feelings of our nature, were cultivated with enthusiastic ardor and unparalleled success. To use the words of an author recently quoted, "It was where Pericles had spoken and ruled; where Thucyclides was then writing; where Socrates was then teaching; where Xenophon and Plato, and Socrates were receiving their education; and where the paintings of Parrhasius and Zeuxis; the sculpture of Phidias and Praxiteles; the architecture of Callicrates and Ictinus; and the sublime dramas of Sophocles and Euripides, formed the delight of the people."†

After taking this view of the state of morals among the Greeks, we shall be less surprised at the remark of Kennet, that "the Romans became more corrupt, as they became imbued in Grecian literature." But to enslave prisoners of war was a custom not confined to the Greeks. "In former times, it was a custom, almost universally established," says an excellent writer on the principles of political law, "that those, who were made prisoners in a just and solemn war, whether they had surrendered themselves, or were taken by main force, became slaves the moment they were conducted into some place dependent on the conqueror. And this right was exercised on all persons whatever, even on those, who happened unfortunately to be in the enemy's country, at the time when the war suddenly broke out. Further, not only the prisoners themselves but their posterity were reduced to the same condition. The effects of this slavery had no bounds. Every thing was per-

* Smith's Thucycl. 2. 77. † Mitford, 4. 432.

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mitted to a master, with respect to his slaves. He had the power over them of life and death."*

Such treatment did the vanquished expect, even when Romans were the victors, that in not a few instances, self-immolation was preferred to the horrors of captivity. "The victorious armies of the Romans, in entering a town by assault, or in forcing an encampment, have found the mother in the act of destroying her children, that they might not be taken; and the dagger of the parent red with the blood of his family, ready to be plunged at last into his own breast."† When Trajan was engaged in his second war with the Dacians, in one of their cities, besieged by the Romans, the men despairing of its longer defence, having slain their wives and children, secretly withdrew to a large cavern in the mountains. (See Ins. on Traj. pillar.) There, unable to sustain or defend themselves, they procured a large quantity of poison, and dissolving it in a caldron, a few individuals were appointed to deal out the fatal potion to the crowds, that rushed eagerly round this fountain of death.

3. Of the state of moral feelings, prevailing among the Romans, we may form some judgment, by considering their triumphs.

As these were decreed and regulated by the public authority, they indicate not private feelings merely, but those of the nation. To exult in prosperity, at the expense of an enemy, humbled and subdued, is usually considered peculiarly ungenerous, as well as immoral. How emphatically this was done in the Roman triumphs, will appear from the following account of them.

In this procession, after the musicians, who sang or played triumphal songs, went the victims to be sacrificed. To these succeeded the carriages bearing the triumphal spoils, which were taken from the enemy. Next came the captive leaders in chains, with their children and attendants. After the captives came the lictors, having their faces wreathed with laurels, followed by a great company of musicians and dancers, dressed like satyrs; in the midst of whom was a pantomime, clothed in

* Burlamaqui, 2. 200. † Ferguson on Civil Society, 174.

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a female garb, whose business it was, by looks and gestures to insult the vanquished. Adam's Roman Antiq. 338.

When Perseus, king of Macedon, was thus led in triumph, his children being in the train, some of whom were so young, as to be insensible of their degradation; the spectacle drew tears even from many of the spectators. (Kennet's Rom. Ant. 226.) Of Perseus himself, it is said, that he appeared like one astonished and deprived of reason through the greatness of his misfortunes. On this occasion, as usual, odes were sung, mixed with raillery, which had for its object, the unhappy captives.

When the general began to turn his chariot from the Forum to the Capitol, it was usual, though not invariable, to order the captive kings and leaders of the enemy to be led to the prison, and there to be slain. And when he reached the capitol, he used to wait, till he heard that these savage orders were executed.

4. Perhaps there is nothing, which more clearly evinces the moral depravity of the Romans, than their gladiatorial shows.

That human sacrifices were offered both by Greeks and Trojans, was noticed in a former lecture. The ancient heathen fancied that the ghosts of the deceased were satisfied, and rendered propitious by human blood. At first, says the learned Kennet, they used to buy captives, or untoward slaves, and offer them at the obsequies. Afterwards they attempted to veil their impious barbarity with the specious show of pleasure and voluntary combat. And therefore, training up, in some tolerable knowledge of weapons, such persons as they had procured, they obliged them, upon the day appointed for sacrificing to departed ghosts, to maintain a mortal encounter at the tombs of their friends. The Roman people, it appears, became extravagantly attached to these exhibitions; so that an ambitious individual, could in no way more readily conciliate their esteem, than by giving them an entertainment of this kind. The emperors obliged the people with shows almost on all occasions. As the occasions increased, so also did the length of the solemnities, and the number of combatants. Julius Caesar, in his edile-

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ship, presented three hundred and twenty pairs. Trajan, whose natural temper is known to have been mild, continued these games for one hundred and twenty three days; during which time they brought out a thousand pairs of gladiators. Lipsius, as quoted by Dr. Paley, affirms, "that the gladiatorial shows sometimes cost Europe twenty or thirty thousand lives in a month, and that not only the men, but even the women of all ranks, were passionately fond of these shows."*

Entertainments of this savage kind were not abolished, until the reign of Constantine, after they had existed, says Kennet, about six hundred years.†

It is well known, that these games were more or less extensively fatal to the parties concerned. The amusement was to observe with what dexterity, one human being could wound, foil, and slay his fellow. When a gladiator was vanquished, he might indeed supplicate the people; but he was by no means certain of having his life spared. It appears to have been no uncommon thing for them to refuse the request; in which case he was obliged to resume his sword, and fight till death for their amusement.

Nigh to the amphitheatre was a place called Spoliarium, to which those, who were killed or mortally wounded, were dragged by a hook.

Similar to the feats of gladiators, were those of Bestiarii in which human beings were brought forth to combat with wild beasts, and to be devoured by them.

During the early existence of these games, females, it appears, were not allowed to attend them. This restriction was afterwards removed; and seats in the amphitheatre were prepared for their accommodation.

Though the condition of the gladiators was commonly that of slaves or captives, yet so generally popular were these games,

* Paley's Evidences, etc. 370. Ryan's Hist. of the Effects of Revealed Religion, 249.

† Gibbon, 5. 205, says, that they were not abolished in fact, though they were by law, until the reign of Honorius, A. D. 400.

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that freemen, in a short time, chose to take a part in them, and hired themselves out for the amphitheatre.* Nay, the knights, the noblemen, and even senators themselves at last, were not ashamed to assume this profession; so that an edict of Augustus was necessary to prevent senators from becoming gladiators. Nor was this all. Roman ladies, even of high rank, became, by attending these exhibitions, so lost to all that tenderness and timidity, which are supposed to characterize the sex, as to assume the habit and weapons of combatants, and contest with men, on the ensanguined arena. This has been animadverted upon by Juvenal, with his appropriate severity.† By Cicero, however, these entertainments were thought scarcely worthy of reprehension. Crudele gladiatorum spectaculum et inhumanum nonnullis videri solet; et haud scio an ita sit, ut nunc fit. "To some, this public show of gladiators, appears cruel and inhuman. Perhaps, as the thing is now managed, it may be so."‡ That such an author should have used expressions thus cold, when speaking of an institution, calculated to deaden the best sensibilities of the heart, and to substitute in their place a brutal ferocity, shows at once the imperious influence of custom, and the inadequacy of gentile philosophy, even in the most elevated minds, to fix the standard of morality.

5. It is well known, that under the Roman government, extreme severity might be exercised towards insolvent debtors.

From the account contained in the second book of Livy, it appears, that the creditor had power, not only of taking from the debtor all his possessions, but likewise of maiming and torturing his body.

Restraints were indeed at a late period imposed on the cruelty and rapacity of usurers, whereby it was provided, that no debtors should be kept in irons or bonds; but that the goods of the debtor, not his person, should be given up to his creditors.§

* Kennet, 272. † Sat. 6. ‡ Tusc. Quaest. Lib. 2. 17.

§ Liv. 8. 23. Adam's Antiq. 45.

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After a certain number of citations, as we are told, the law granted to the debtor thirty days of grace to raise the sum, for which he was accountable. After the thirty days had expired, if the debtor had not discharged the debt, he was led to the praetor, who delivered him over to the mercy of his creditors. These bound him and kept him in chains for the space of sixty days. Afterwards, for three market days successively, the debtor was brought to the tribunal of the praetor. Then a public crier proclaimed in the forum the debt, for which the prisoner was detained. It often happened, that rich persons redeemed the prisoner by paying his debts. But if no person appeared in his behalf, after the third day, the creditor had a right to inflict the punishment, appointed by the law. The law may be translated into the following words. "Let him on the third market day, be punished with death, or sold beyond the Tiber, as a slave."*

6. It will give some further knowledge of the moral state of the ancient heathen, to consider their treatment of slaves. That a large proportion of the population in the States of antiquity consisted of slaves, is well known. Throughout almost all Greece, says the Abbe Barthelemy, quoting from Athenaeus, the number of slaves infinitely exceeds that of citizens. A similar, but more definite account is given by Mitford. Anach. 1. 242.

In Lacedaemon, slaves were treated with great severity. Nothing, it appears, could exceed their cruelty to their slaves, who cultivated their grounds for them, and performed all their works and manufactures. These slaves, says Dr. Leland, had no justice done them, whatever insults or injuries they suffered. Among the Spartan youth, it was customary, not only to hunt wild beasts, but to lie in ambush for the Helots, or slaves. Thus were these unhappy men, to whom the State was so much indebted, attacked and slain, for the purpose of rendering their masters' sons adroit in the use of arms.

* Encycl. Brit. Art. Slavery.

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There is another passage in the Lacedaemonian history, which clearly shows how much reason the Helots had to complain, not only of the cruelty, but also of the perfidy of their masters.

When, in the midst of the Peloponnesian war, the Spartans had cause to entertain fears of the Helots, proclamation was made that such as thought themselves worthy of meriting by good conduct in arms, the honor of freemen, should present themselves before the magistrate. Two thousand presented themselves, and were all secretly slain! (Mitford 1. 292. Thucyd. 1. 360.)

Herodotus informs us, that the Scythians, praised as they have been for their innocence, put out the eyes of their slaves.*

Nor does it appear, that slavery at Rome assumed a milder aspect, than in other ancient nations. It was not unusual, we are informed, for masters to put their old, sick and infirm slaves, on an island in the Tiber, where they were suffered to perish. (Leland 11. 67.) Masters had an absolute power over their slaves. (Juv. vi. 219.) They might scourge, or put them to death at pleasure. (See Potter's Antiq. Art. Helots.) When the former of these punishments was inflicted, the slave was suspended with a weight tied to his feet, that he might not move them. When they were punished capitally, it was commonly by crucifixion. Even this dreadful punishment according to Juvenal, might result from caprice, or a sudden gust of passion in a profligate mistress.

The following account I find quoted by three respectable authors. Vedius Pollio, an intimate friend of Augustus, literally fed his fishes with the flesh of his slaves. "This cruelty was discovered, when one of his servants broke a glass in the presence of the emperor, who had been invited to a feast. The master ordered the servant to be seized. But he threw himself at the feet of the emperor, begging him to interpose, and not suffer him to be devoured by fishes. Upon this, the causes of

* Herod. 4. 2.

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his apprehensions were examined; and Augustus, astonished at the barbarity of his favorite, caused the servant to be dismissed and all the fish ponds to be filled up, and the chrystal glasses of Pollio to be broken to pieces."*

Here, you will observe, that this horrible punishment was to have been inflicted for no greater crime, than the casual breaking of a piece of furniture;—that this Vedius Pollio lived in the Augustan age, when Roman literature and refinement were carried to the greatest perfection; and that though the emperor ordered that his fish ponds should be destroyed, and his glasses broken, the favorite received no other punishment.

We may form some opinion of the extent of human sufferings, occasioned by slavery in the Roman Empire, if, in addition to these facts, we consider, that a single individual, seven years before the Christian era, had slaves to the number of four thousand one hundred and sixteen; and that if any one of these made an unsuccessful attempt to regain his liberty, he was marked on the forehead, with a red hot iron.†

In another lecture, by divine permission, the subject will be resumed; and further proof will be exhibited of the moral degradation of the heathen, whether of ancient or modern times.

* Lempriere, Leland, and Encycl. Brit.

† Encycl. Brit. ut sup.

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LECTURE XVI.

HEATHEN MORALS.

In the present lecture, the subject of the last will be further pursued. Additional evidence will be exhibited of the corrupt state of morals, prevailing among pagans, whether of ancient or modern times.

1. We notice the crime of unchastity.

After what has been already said on the moral character of the heathen divinities, and on the nature of those rites, which were observed in their worship, much evidence will not be required to convince you, that chastity, as inculcated by Christianity, and by every rational system of moral philosophy, made no very conspicuous figure in the pagan character. For this reason, as well as for others, not less obvious, you will neither expect nor desire, that a long series of proofs should be adduced.

That both the Greeks and Romans suffered to pass without censure, and openly tolerated those connexions, which Christianity pronounces criminal, and for which, it declares, that the *wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience*, is well known. That which was allowed by such philosophic statesmen, as Solon and Cato, would scarcely excite a scruple in an ignorant, unbridled populace.*

Alluding to licentious intercourse among persons, who had not acknowledged the sacredness of hymenial obligations, Cicero in his oration for Caelius,† makes the following extraordinary appeal. *Quando enim hoc non factum est? Quando*

* Potter's Gr. Antiq. 1. 190. 2. 313. † Orat. pro Caelio, § 20.

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reprehensum? Quando non permissum? Quando denique fuit, ut quod licet, non liceret?

We may have occasion hereafter to animadvert upon this sentiment, as showing how unqualified were the most enlightened among the heathen to become guides to others, either in the science or practice of morality. But, at present, we consider it only, as indicating the licentiousness of the senate, before which the sentiment was uttered, and the licentiousness of the Roman nation, even in its better days. For, of any one, who should condemn the liberty of which he speaks, it is added: *abhorret non modo ab hujus seculi licentia, verum etiam a majorum consuetudine atque concessis.*

Even in that interesting and sacred relation, from which proceeds so much of the enjoyment and purity of domestic life, the Greeks and Romans were little acquainted with those better and finer feelings, which Christianity inspires. The Spartans could hardly be said to have an individual existence. They were, in every thing, identified with the State. Marriage was little more, than an institution for keeping up their military establishment; and to this purpose, Lycurgus himself, designed that it should be made grossly subservient.

At Athens, before the age of Pericles, wives were treated merely as a better kind of servants. From them they differed little in their education. They lived in a secluded part of the house with their female slaves, associating little with each other, and scarcely at all with men, even their nearest relations. Thus ignorant and degraded, the Athenian matrons gradually lost, first the respect of their husbands, and by unavoidable consequence, their affection. Unhappily there existed at this time at Athens a set of profligate females, whose intellects and manners were more cultivated. To associate with these, became customary, not only for the thoughtless and dissipated, but even for statesmen and philosophers, whose example ought to have inflicted on vice the brand of infamy.

Set free from the restraints of shame, and emboldened by

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such examples, licentiousness no longer courted retirement, but openly asserted claims to general influence and dominion.

That little sanctity was attached to matrimonial contracts, and that conjugal infidelity had become general among the Romans, at the time when Christianity was introduced, appears both from Juvenal and Tacitus.* We ought indeed to make great allowances for the liberty, used in poetical satires; but it is impossible to imagine, that any author could have written with the spirit of Juvenal, unless it had been roused by witnessing a general contempt not only of chastity, but of decorum.

Tacitus was no poet. From his testimony no deductions are to be made on account of hyperbole or imagination. Yet he speaks of adultery, as a crime which had become common, *culpa inter viros et feminas vulgata.*

Nothing gives us a more unfavorable opinion of Roman chastity, than the welcome reception, found by pantomimes and buffoons, both in private families, and on the stage. Of buffoons, Rosinus informs us, there were two kinds; one to give amusement in private circles, and the other on the theatre. He adds, that on account of the licentiousness of their language, and the indecency of their gestures, they became extremely acceptable to the people. (Rosini. Ant. Rom. 325. Salvian. 185.) This spectacle, new in the time of Augustus, was performed by action alone. It was exhibited, says Gifford, on a magnificent theatre raised for that purpose. It so astonished and delighted the people, that they forsook in some measure, their tragic and comic poets, for the more expressive ballettes of Pylades and Bathyllus.† We can form no idea, continues this author, of the attachment of the Romans to these exhibitions. It degenerated into a kind of passion, and occupied their whole souls.

When it is considered, that, by these pantomimes, were represented, before vast and promiscuous assemblies, some of the worst actions of the heathen gods; and that the actors were

* As to domestic education among the Romans, see Quint. Inst. Lib. 1. 2, near the beginning.

† Juvenal, 6. 63. Gifford's note.

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held in admiration, not by the common people only, but by persons of high authority, and even by the emperors themselves, it is easily seen how extensively and rapidly the contagion would be communicated, and how insensibly, but inevitably would be dissolved those restraints, which it is the honor of our intellectual and moral natures to feel, to acknowledge, and obey.

It is well known, that a species of impurity, still more flagitious and hateful, was neither unknown or uncommon among the ancient heathen. Xenophon, as quoted by Leland,* represents this to have been so common, that it was, in many places, established by the public laws. Aristotle informs us, that, among the Cretans, there was a law encouraging this crime. The lawgiver of Athens, it is reported, apparently on good evidence, neither passed any general law against this vice, nor was himself pure from its contamination. Cicero, from a passage contained in his fifth book of Tusculan questions, appears to have considered the Greeks, as generally yielding to it.† Nor did the Romans, in this particular, differ from them, as appears undeniably from the second Eclogue of Virgil, from several passages, in the writings of Tully, but especially from the Satires of Juvenal. The same abominations are now practised both in China and Japan, where they are accounted neither a crime nor a singularity.

After what has been stated, no one will be surprised, at learning the prevalence of other vices. Those which have been mentioned, show an entire prostration of moral principle. Open vice, must of course, have been exhibited, just in proportion as interest could be advanced, or passions gratified.

Accordingly we are told by Polybius, as quoted by Dr. Middleton, that the want of integrity was general among the Greeks. "Those, who managed the public monies in Greece, though they have ever so many bonds and sureties for their behavior, could not be induced to act honestly, or preserve their faith in the case even of a single talent."‡

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* Leland, 2. 56. See also 59. † Lib. 5. 20. ‡ Life of Cicero, 1. 133.

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That the Greeks had nothing of those moral restraints, which result from a conviction of the divine existence, perfections, and government, and from an expectation of being answerable at a righteous tribunal, has been made sufficiently evident by the testimony of Thucydides, concerning the moral effects, which the plague produced among the Athenians. This testimony was exhibited in a preceding lecture.

As to the moral state of Rome, we have full satisfaction, from the attestation of those who were eye witnesses. No one can read Sallust's account of the Catilinian and Jugurthine wars, without forming a very unfavorable opinion of that nation both as to private morals and public virtue. He represents it, as sunk in voluptuousness and profligacy. The conspiracy which Cataline formed, was extensive. Men of all ranks were engaged in it. Yet the design was nefarious; and such were the characters, by whom it was supported.

Jugurtha, who well knew, declared, that all things were venal at Rome; and his own power and interest were preserved many years, by bribing the senate, and those generals, who were sent to subdue him.

The works of Horace and Juvenal go directly to evince Roman depravity. No one can read the works of the former without being convinced, that those, among whom he lived, and of whom he wrote, were emphatically without God in the world. But his severity towards others is not the only evidence, by which we are to judge. As he himself wrote in character of a moral instructor and without concealing his name; as, moreover, he says much in favor of virtue, it is hardly to be supposed, that he thought his own character very far below what might reasonably be expected of a teacher of morals. Yet no one, in the least acquainted with his writings, can doubt, for a moment, of the great impurity and sensuality of his life. His avowed course of living was that of an ingenious, polished, and well taught libertine, who, in expectation of no future state, was determined to get as much of mirth and sensual pleasure, as could be obtained in the short space of mortal existence. Now,

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if such was the avowed life of one, who wrote much against the dissoluteness of manners, then prevalent, we can have no doubt that the tone of morals in general was extremely depressed.

The writings of the other Roman satirist are more remarkably to our purpose, than those of Horace. One can scarcely conceive, that vices so various, so excessive, gross, and nauseating, should among a people of high refinement, degrade the human character. Whatever of selfishness, cruelty, revenge, or lust, the boldest imagination is able to conceive, was practised among that people, whose power gave law to all nations, and whose literary productions still excite the admiration of the world. Whoever compares the descriptions of Juvenal, with those contained in the first chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, will be forcibly struck with the resemblance. After speaking of crimes, the most unnatural and detestable, the latter proceeds to say, that the Gentiles were *filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.*

This is no more than their own poets acknowledge, mentioning, at the same time, the names of persons thus guilty: and using a grossness of language, which the inspired apostle is cautious to avoid. In the Institutions of Quinctilian, are several passages which indirectly, but forcibly, prove the enormous depravity of Roman manners. I refer to the cautions, which he gives as to the intercourse to be maintained between instructors and pupils in the schools of Rhetoric. E. g. see Lib. 2. Cap. 2.

We are next to consider more particularly, the morality prevailing among pagans of later times.

1. In regard to the Chinese, though their external manners, says a late writer, are marked with the most ceremonious politeness, and seem to indicate the greatest mildness and benev-

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olence of disposition, some of their customs and usages denote the most singular unfeelingness and most savage brutality.* The morals, especially of the lower classes, are beyond measure dissolute, and their practices most dishonest; nor can they be regulated by any principle but self-interest, nor restrained but by the fear of punishment.†

The horrid practice of infanticide, sanctioned by custom, and tolerated by government, is here carried to the most shocking extent.

The police of Pekin, says a late writer, employ persons to go about the streets at an early hour, every morning, for the purpose of picking up the children, that have been thrown out in the night. The bodies are carried to a common pit without the walls, into which, those, that are alive, as well as those that are dead, are promiscuously thrown. According to the best accounts, no fewer than nine thousand infants, are thus inhumanly butchered by their unfeeling parents, or thrown out and buried alive every year, in the city of Pekin; and it is supposed, that about an equal number are destroyed in the same manner, in the other parts of the empire. The substance of this account is taken from Barrow, a late traveller in China.

"The practice of infanticide," says Sir Wm. Jones, "so far as regards female infants, is fully substantiated with respect to a particular tribe on the frontiers of Juanpore; a district of the province of Benares. A race of Hindoos, called Rajekoomars, reside there. And it was discovered in 1789 only, that the custom of putting to death their female offspring, by causing their mothers to starve them, had long subsisted, and did actually then very generally prevail among them. The resident at Benares, where the Rajekoomars dwell, had an opportunity of authenticating the existence of the custom from their own confessions."‡

Nothing can be more satisfactory, than this evidence. The illustrious author, from whose communication this extract is

* Bigland, 4. 312. † Tytler's El. 2. 250.

‡ Asiatic Researches, 4. 338. See also Conie's Serm. 52.

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made, introduces the account by remarking, that the crime alleged is of such nature, as ought not without the most unexceptionable testimony to be believed. Yet he considers the fact, as fully substantiated.*

The practice is common among a race of Hindoos, called Rajpoots. Without alleging any other reason, than the difficulty of providing for daughters, they starve their female infants to death.†

To a similar fact, we have a more recent witness in Dr. Buchanan; from whose Memoirs the following is taken. "If a child refuse the mother's milk, whether from disease, or from any other cause, it is supposed to be under the influence of an evil spirit. In this case, the babe is put into a basket, and hung upon a tree, for three days. It generally happens that before the expiration of that time, the infant is dead, being destroyed by ants, or by birds of prey. If it be alive at the end of three days, it is taken home, and means are used to preserve its life."

As to the general moral character of the Hindoos, the author last mentioned has exhibited the testimony of three competent judges. The first, a king of Hindoostan, who was well acquainted with the higher class of the Hindoos. The second, a city magistrate, who was conversant with the lower classes. The third, an author, well versed in their mythology. The first of these was a Mohammedan; the second a modern philosopher; and the third a Christian.

According to the first, who was no less a personage than Tamerlane the Great, "The inhabitants of Hindoostan and Bengal, are equally debilitated in their corporeal, and inert in their mental powers. They are inexorable in their temper, and at the same time, so penurious and sordid in mind, that nothing can be obtained from them, but by personal violence. It appears unquestionable to me, said that mighty chieftain, that

* The Bushmen, when they have more children than they can provide for, bury them alive. Record. vol. 2. no. 52. See also horrible superstitions mentioned, Record. 3. no. 51.

† Memoirs of an Eccl. Establishment in India, 60.

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this people are under the displeasure of the Almighty; otherwise a prophet would have been appointed for them to turn them away from the worship of idols, and fire, and cows, and to direct them to the adoration of the true God. Like those demons, who, with a view to deceive, can assume the most specious appearances, the native of Hindoostan cultivates imposture, fraud, and deception, and considers them to be meritorious accomplishments. Should any person trust to him the care of his property, that person will be only the nominal possessor of it."

The second witness is Mr. Holwell, who was a city magistrate at Calcutta, about the middle of the last century. "The Gentoos," says he, "are as degenerate, crafty, and superstitious, litigious, and wicked a people, as any race of beings in the old world, if not eminently more so; especially the common run of Bramins. And we can truly aver, that during almost five years, that we presided in the Judicial Court of Calcutta, never any murder, nor other atrocious crime came before us, but it was proved, in the end, that a Bramin was at the bottom of it."

Now, if such were, in general, the character of the instructors of religion, we wonder the less at that entire want of integrity, which he charges upon the people.

The third witness is Capt. Wilford, author of Essays on Indian and Egyptian Mythology, who had long resided in the society of the Bramins. "The pundit of Capt. Wilford, having for a considerable time been guilty of interpolating his books, and fabricating new sentences in old works, to answer a particular purpose, was at length detected, and publicly disgraced. As a last resort to save his character, he brought ten Bramins, not only as his compurgators, but to swear by what is most sacred in their religion to the genuineness of the extracts."

This depravity of morals was the legitimate offspring of their religious system. Agreeably to a remark made in regard to the ancient pagans, it may be said of these heathen, that their religion corrupted them. Such was the character of their gods,

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and such the ceremonies observed in their worship, that moral sensibility and discernment must have been gradually destroyed. By those scenes, which were exhibited at their temples on days of public festivity, the law written upon the heart must have been effaced, and all distinction between virtue and vice confounded.*

* The following passage is appended to a sermon preached at Northampton, Ms. Sept. 1817, by Pres. Appleton, before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. As it relates to the moral degradation of the heathen, it was thought worthy of insertion.

"Those, who desire to be informed on this subject, will read, with great interest, in the twelfth volume of the Christian Observer, an abstract of the proceedings of the British Parliament on the subject of renewing the East India Company's charter. A few extracts may not be unacceptable to the reader. 'In reply to the observation of Sir. H. MONTGOMERY, that the morals of the Hindoos were already better, than those of the people of England, Mr. WILBERFORCE produced a great variety of extracts, all tending to disprove that assertion, and to show, that the moral and social character of the Hindoos is singularly debased. The documents from which these extracts were taken, were, 1st, The answers of the Zillah judges to questions, put to them by Lord WELLESLEY, respecting the moral state of the people of India; which had been laid on the table of the House of Commons, and which exhibited a frightful picture of vice and moral degradation. 2dly, The works of such writers, as BERNIER, TOURNEFORT, SONNERAT, SCRAFTON, etc. 3dly, The concurrent testimony of such men, as Governor HOLWELL, Lord TEIGNMOUTH, Sir JOHN McPHERSON, Lord CORNWALLIS, Sir WILLIAM JONES, Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, etc. etc. We shall not, at present, think it necessary to give the quotations at large. They agree remarkably in assigning to the natives of Hindoostan an extraordinary degree of moral debasement, and they show, that the vices imputed to them are not confined to the lower orders, but that they equally prevail even in the highest class, that of the Bramins.—Mr. COLBROOKE says, 'To such a pitch of audacity has perjury reached in this province, that a total distrust of human testimony is the consequence.' Another gentleman, Mr. TETTERSAL, in the province of Decca, one of the most populous provinces in that part of the world, says, 'The minds of the natives are wholly uncultivated. Of the duties of morality they have no idea. They are indolent and grossly sensual. They have all the vices of the savage life, without any of its virtues. They have no attachment but what centres in self; for the ties of relationship seem to render inveteracy more inveterate.' Mr. HOLWELL speaks of them, as the most corrupt people on the face of the earth, and the Bramins, as exceeding in wickedness every other class among them."

"In no part of the world, can there be found men," says a public

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Of a similar tendency were their ideas of a retribution. Nothing could be more inadequate, than their standard of right and wrong. We look in vain, among their institutions, for those great principles of morality, alike recognized in every system of true religion, whether natural or revealed. They acknowledge a heaven; but it was not to be exclusively the reward of virtue. They feared a hell; but it was not vice alone which put them in danger of being sent thither. Future punishment was threatened to those, who should kill an animal, or even through ignorance, shed blood from the body of a Bramin. "Whereas, those rulers of the earth, say they, who, desirous of defending each other, exert their utmost strength in battle, without ever averting their faces, ascend after death, directly to heaven."*

It was observed, in a former lecture, that according to the testimony of Mr. Marsden, whose history of Sumatra is mentioned in terms of high approbation, the inhabitants of that island render worship to no Supreme Being. The same author, as quoted by Col. Symes,† expresses a belief, that the inhabitants in the northern part of the island eat human flesh; and the authorities, on which he grounds his belief, says Col. Symes, seem to authenticate the fact. It does not however appear, that human flesh was substituted by them in place of ordinary food, but eaten rather, as a barbarous ceremony, to indicate revenge on their enemies, or abhorrence of crimes, the only victims being prisoners taken in war, or capital convicts. The New Zealanders do this, though they believe, that the soul of a man, whose body is thus devoured, is doomed to eternal torments.‡

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officer of the government of Madras, writing to the governor, "to whose habits and affections, the practice of vice, through all its debasing, loathsome, and hideous gradations, seems so familiar and dear, as to the natives of this country.—*Christian Observer*, xi. 356.

* Inst. of Moses, pp. 269, 264. † Embassy to Ava, 130.

‡ Bigland, 4. 421. See also Ch. Miss. Register, 1816, p. 522.

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In the Boston Repertory for August, if I mistake not, 1810, we were told, that a British ship's crew, consisting of a number between thirty and forty, were, all but one, eaten by the inhabitants of New Zealand. This account is rendered the more credible from its coincidence with the character of the New Zealanders, as given us by Pinkerton, who represents it as customary for them to devour their captives taken in war.*

In Anzico, a kingdom in the northwest of Africa, it is asserted that the markets are supplied with human flesh! nay, it is even affirmed, that all the dead are devoured.

The inhabitants of New Holland, it is well known, are in the most deplorable state of ignorance, barbarity, and vice. In some of their ceremonies, the very form and character of man seems despised, and the superiority of brutes acknowledged.

On a former occasion, something was said of the religion of the Otaheitans. We now speak of their morals.

From the following statement, made by missionaries, sent to these savages in 1797, it appears, that the favorable impressions, at first received as to their state and character, were by no means justified by further acquaintance. The state of society was soon found to be such, that while it excited the compassion of the missionaries, it presented many discouragements. The duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children, are neither understood nor practised. They view their children as property, which every parent has a right to dispose of according to his own inclination. And the event is, that many of them are murdered, as soon as they are born. But the most horrible source of pollution and cruelty, found among them is the Arreoy Society.† This is an association of individuals, descended from the principal families in the Society Islands. They are continually wandering about from one island to another, and support themselves by plundering the inhabitants.‡ Each of these men has two or three females, whom he calls his

* Geog. 2. 488.

† This society is now at an end through the influence of Christianity.

‡ Lord's Hist. of Missions. 2. 10 et seq.

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wives. But their habit is to live in a state of promiscuous concubinage, and uniformly to murder every infant, which is the fruit of their intercourse.

Parents, when they become old, are treated with every mark of neglect. Their society is avoided as a disgrace. And, indeed, to such a height has the contempt of this people for old age arisen, that the term "old man" is proverbially used to express any thing worthless.

The inhabitants of the Caribbean Islands were not only cannibals, but fed upon their own children. Nay, it is asserted on such authority, as was satisfactory to Mr. Locke, that their children were mutilated, for the purpose of their being fattened for the day of slaughter.

The same author quotes, from the voyage of Baumgarten, an account of certain persons among the Turks, degraded beneath even brutality itself, who are, nevertheless, regarded as saints. The passage is too remarkable entirely to escape the notice of those, who study the Essay on Human Understanding; and too disgusting, though clothed in Roman language, to be introduced into a public lecture.

Thus have we taken a brief view of the religious and moral state of the heathen world, as it was before the coming of Christ, and as it has been in modern times. Whether we fix our attention on nations, the most civilized, or the most barbarous, we find them entertaining absurd, incoherent, and blasphemous views as to religion; we find them debased and polluted with the greatest crimes. In other words, they were alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance, which was in them.

In view of all the evidence, which has been adduced, no person, it is believed, making a sober use of his intellectual powers, will, for a moment, assert, that accessions of light and knowledge on the subjects of morality and religion, were not, from some source or other, devoutly to be desired.

Some, it is possible, however, may not be convinced that this inference can fairly be made from the facts, collected in

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this and the preceding lecture. What, it may be asked, though the heathen both of ancient and modern times, have been dissolute in their manners? If that will prove any thing to the disadvantage of their religion, is there not a sufficiency of vice among Christians to authorize the same conclusion in relation to theirs?

I answer that the difference between the two cases consists in this; when Christians violate the principles of morality, they as certainly violate the principles of their religion. Whereas the pagan might be impure, dishonest, and revengeful;—nay, all human vices might flourish in him, with unrestrained luxuriance, and yet his character not be materially different from theirs, whom his religion taught him to worship as gods. It has been shown, that the tendency of paganism was to pollute the heart, and to debase the character. When it can be shown, that such is the natural effect of Christianity, it will, I presume, be abandoned by those, who are now its votaries. But this, it is well known, can never be made to appear.

In regard to heathen religion, three things, you will observe, have been shown; 1. The gross, absurd, and impious opinions, which it taught concerning God and a future state; 2. The cruel and obscene rites, which were practised in the established worship; 3. The general profligacy of pagan manners.

The last two are clearly the result of the other. Their viciousness of character, and the cruelty and licentiousness of their worship, were the legitimate offspring of their false sentiments as to religion. Hence it appears, that their errors in speculation were both practical and dangerous.

But, though what has been said, will probably be thought sufficient to show, that further instruction on the relations, duties, and destinies of man, was greatly wanted; further doubts may still arise, whether anything supernatural were requisite for this purpose; and whether the light of philosophy might not have been sufficient to expel the incumbent darkness.

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In regard to the soul's immortality, this question has been already answered. Philosophy was shown to have given no certainty on that subject. How far it was an adequate guide on other subjects in religion, and what were its powers in purifying the heart and life, will, if God permit, be considered in a future lecture.

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LECTURE XVII.

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS INADEQUATE GUIDES IN RELIGION.

Having contemplated the darkness, in which the heathen world was enveloped, and that general profligacy, by which the human character was degraded, we are now to inquire whether the evil were likely to be remedied by those, whose superior application and wisdom procured for them the distinction of philosophers.

That mankind were not either reformed, or well instructed on the subjects of religion, in consequence of philosophy, those facts, which have been exhibited, sufficiently prove. That there were no instances, however, in which philosophical instruction produced any good effects on the sentiments and morals of them who received it, I do not assert. Solitary individuals, and even communities may have received benefit from such instruction. Polemo was suddenly recovered from a life of effeminacy and dissipation by a moral lecture from Xenophanes.* A surprising reformation is said to have been effected at Crotona by the school of Pythagoras. But notwithstanding these instances, no general alteration was produced in theological opinions,—no extensive amendment in the views and morals of men. Their worship was not henceforth confined to one Being, almighty, holy and independent; nor was the number of pagan deities ever diminished. Whatever we have noticed of absurdity in sentiment, licentiousness in worship, or viciousness in deportment, existed long after Pythagoras had established his school in Italy.

* Enfield's Hist. of Phil. 1. 242.

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We shall now endeavor to show, that this is a matter, which ought to excite no surprise; that pagan philosophy not only did not produce correct sentiments and pure morals, but had no tendency towards such a result.

I. That philosophy was no adequate guide, as to subjects most interesting to man, appears from the confession of some who professed it. Socrates acknowledges, that divine instruction and assistance were necessary to enable men to worship God in a suitable manner.

To the same purpose speaks Jamblicus, as quoted by Leland. "It is manifest," says that philosopher, "that those things are to be done, which are pleasing to God; but what they are, it is not easy to know, except a man were taught them by God himself, or by some person, who had received them from God, or obtained a knowledge of them by some other means."

II. Philosophers were extremely erroneous and discordant in regard to their views of the Supreme Being. There is no subject, says Cicero, concerning which, not only the ignorant, but also the learned, are so little agreed. While some denied his existence, others spake of it in the most doubtful terms, or confounded his existence with that of the universe.

Bion of Scythia was openly an atheist, and took much pleasure in ridiculing those who sacrificed to the gods; though at the close of his life he retracted his former sentiments, and professed repentance for all which he had said offensive to religion.*

Theodorus was ejected, first from Cyrene, and then from Athens, on a charge of atheism. This charge is supported by the authority of Cicero, Plutarch, and Suidas, as quoted by Stanley. Protagoras doubted whether there were gods, says Cicero,† and Diagoras denied them. Democritus either entirely rejected the notion of Deity, or allowed him no share in the creation and government of the world.‡ The same

* Stanley's Lives, 147. † De Nat. Deor. 1. 3. ‡ Lact. 9.

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may be said of Epicurus.* As it respects religion, or even morality, it is immaterial, which of these opinions is embraced.

Many of those, who acknowledged an invisible, presiding Power, had, notwithstanding, very lax opinions as to the relation, which subsists between that Power and the objects of this world. Of the Ionic school, instituted by Thales, no one, says Leland, before Anaxagoras, attributed the creation of the world to an intelligent mind.

To the same Anaxagoras, the preceptor of Socrates, Mitford attributes the first conception of an eternal, almighty, good Being, independent of matter.

Among ancient philosophers, there is none, perhaps, who has been held in higher estimation by the Christian world, than Socrates. He entertained sentiments concerning the Supreme Being, which were, in a great measure, just, and were highly elevated. Yet, in his last conversation with his disciples, a little before he received the fatal potion, he spake of the gods, in the plural number, and did not reprove his friends for swearing by them. Nay, in his defence before his judges, he addresses Melitus, his accuser, in the following manner, "I conjure you in the name of those gods, whose interest is now concerned, to explain your meaning more clearly." Moreover, Socrates habitually sacrificed to the gods after the manner of his country. And Xenophon informs us, that he appealed to this fact to repel the charge, brought against him of not acknowledging as gods, those whom his country recognized as such. Besides, what account can be given of the sacrifice, which, in the last moments of his life, when there could be no temptation to dissemble his opinions, he directed his friends to offer to Æsculapius? I know of no method of accounting for this, but by supposing, that, besides the one Supreme Being, "Socrates admitted the existence of others, who hold a middle station between God and man, to whose immediate agency he ascribed the phenomena of nature, and whom he believed to be particularly concerned in the management of human affairs." This is

* Enf. Hist. Phil. 1. 432. So also of Strato and Diogenes.

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indeed the opinion attributed to him by Dr. Enfield. It appears then, that, however correct may have been the opinions of Socrates, as to the Supreme Being, he was nevertheless a polytheist, paying religious homage to those objects, which had been deified by pagan superstition.

Similar observations are applicable to Plato. He spake in exalted language of the Supreme God. (Eus. Præp. Ev. p. 211.) Yet he seems not to have considered him, as the object to which human beings were to direct their worship. (Anach. iv. 312, 313.) Accordingly Eugubinus employs a chapter, in assigning reasons why Plato, in his treatise De Legibus, prescribes the worship of inferior deities, such as the celestial luminaries, rather than the Supreme God; viz. that the latter is incomprehensible and not to be expressed in words.*

Cicero, it is known, as well as Plato, has written De Legibus. But the unity of God is no more recognized in the political institutions of the one than of the other. The Supreme God, is indeed named; but he is not exhibited as the object of worship. Polytheism, was to be the religion of his contemplated community; and the worship of human spirits was expressly required. Divos, et eos, qui cælestes semper habiti, colunto: et ollos, quos endo cœlo merita vocaverint, Herculem, Liberum, Æsculapium, Castorem, Pollucem, Quirinum.†

This is certainly a remarkable passage. Cicero either believed that Hercules, Bacchus, Romulus were gods, or he did not. And, so far as our present object is concerned, viz. to show how incompetent he was to teach the doctrines of religion, it is not very material, which of these suppositions is found to be true. In the one case, he was grossly, though sincerely an idolater; in the other, he enjoined on men to worship as gods those whom he knew to be entitled to no such honor.

Plotinus, a follower of Plato, speaks of Deity in a manner calculated rather to confound his readers, than to give them

* "It is difficult to attain," says Plato, "and dangerous to publish the knowledge of the true God." Gibbon, 2. 390. Gibbon has some good remarks on the general subject, 2. 296.

† De Leg. 2. 8.

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any distinct ideas of the Supreme Being. "Of the unity of God," saith he, "nothing can be predicated, neither being, nor essence, nor life; because it is above all these."*

It seems to have been no uncommon opinion among ancient philosophers, that anger could never be attributed to Deity. If by this they had meant only, that the divine nature is incapable of that mental agitation, implied in human anger, the sentiment, I suppose, would have been unexceptionable. They, however, considered it as implying that no sufferings were to be apprehended from the divine justice. Agreeably to this are the words of Seneca. *Deos nemo sanus timet. Furor est enim metuere salutaria.* 'No man, in the exercise of his reason, fears the gods. It is madness to fear that which is salutary.' Again, *Dei immortales nec volunt obesse, nec possunt.* 'The immortal gods have neither the inclination nor power to hurt any one.' To the same purpose, in his ninety-fifth epistle, he asserts, *Errat, siquis putat illos nocere velle. Non possunt. Nec accipere injuriam queant, nec facere.* 'He is in an error, who imagines, that the gods have a disposition to hurt any one. It is impossible. They can neither do nor receive an injury.'

It is obvious, that such sentiments are consistent neither with truth, nor with the well being of mankind in the present state.

1. They are not true. God does not indeed possess either the weakness or passions of men. Yet are there some things, which he views with approbation, and others, which he contemplates with pleasure. Nothing can be more reproachful to God, than to represent him indifferent to virtue and vice. But if he is not indifferent to these, his creatures will not be treated as if he were. It is so far from being madness, therefore, to fear God, i. e. to view him as the punisher of sin, as well as the bountiful rewarder of virtue, that no sentiments different from these, are worthy of God, or consistent with the reason of man.

But secondly, this opinion of Seneca is doubtless, in a very

* Plotinus Ennead. 3. Lib. 8. cap. 9.

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high degree, unfriendly to civil order and good morals. If it be generally believed, that the Supreme Being has no disposition to punish vice, as well as to reward virtue, and that no evil from an avenging hand is to be apprehended by the offender, the most powerful restraints will then be removed from human passions, and society will be a turbid ocean, on which the conflicting elements of our nature will mingle and rage in wild disorder.

Philosophy was an insufficient guide, as it respects that government, which the Supreme Being maintains over the world.

In the introduction to Cicero's treatise De Natura Deorum, he represents it as the great question at issue among philosophers, whether the gods enjoy their existence in eternal leisure, regardless of human affairs; or whether, having created the world, they employ their power and wisdom in sustaining and governing it. The latter of these opinions is defended by Balbus, the stoic. It is ridiculed by the Epicurian Velleius; and is not treated with much more respect by Cotta the Academic, who appears to some readers, as speaking the sentiments of Cicero himself.

Tacitus, who lived when Christianity had been for some time introduced, and who, for that reason, had better opportunity, than more ancient philosophers, to obtain correct views concerning divine providence, not only intimates his own doubts on the subject, but asserts, that "many of the wisest men, had this opinion fixed in their minds, that neither our beginning, nor our end, nor men at all, are regarded by the gods."*

Pliny, the elder, represents it as a thing ridiculous, to imagine, that the Supreme God should maintain a providence in human affairs. Pliny was not only an indefatigable student, but devoted his studies to natural philosophy. The works of God, whence arguments are drawn to prove his existence and attributes, were the object of his unwearied investigation.

* Leland, (1. 387.)

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Still was he not convinced, that there is a God, who governs in the earth.*

On this subject, it was remarked in the lecture on Divine Providence, that even those among ancient philosophers who were most decided as to the general doctrine, were not agreed. The Stoics firmly believed, and ably defended the doctrine; but did not all believe it in the same sense. "I assert," says Balbus in Cicero, "not only that the world, but all its parts were first created, and are at all times governed by the providence of the gods." This is indeed strong language. But, by what follows in the same work, the author has prevented us from understanding it in the most comprehensive sense. He tells us, that "the gods take care of great matters only, and neglect those which are small."† Quinctilian expresses himself very impiously against Providence on occasion of the loss of his sons. Nay, he absolutely denies a Providence.‡

III. Another important reason, why ancient philosophers were inadequate guides in matters of religion, was, that they concealed from the common people those truths, which they themselves had discovered. "It was a maxim with them," says Dr. Priestley, "to think with the wise, and to act with the vulgar." This was indeed briefly mentioned in the lecture concerning the immortality of the soul. It is now advanced for a different purpose. The custom of concealing truth from the vulgar is of great antiquity. The philosophers of Egypt were attached to it, no less than those of Greece and Rome. Clement of Alexandria, as quoted by Leland, asserts, "that the Egyptians did not expose their religious mysteries promiscuously to all; nor did they communicate the knowledge of their divine things to the people." In the Timæus of Plato, there is the following sentence: "It is a difficult matter to find out the Maker and Parent of the universe; and when you have found

* See also Quinctilian. Inst. Lib. 5. 6. Cum etiam philosophi quidam sint reperti, qui deos habere curam rerum humanarum negarent.

† De Nat. Deor. 2. 66. ‡ Inst. Lib. 6 Procem.

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him, to declare him to all, is impossible."* Or, as the Abbe Barthelemy, and after him Dr. M'Knight gives the sense, "It is not safe or lawful to discover him to others, when found." The former of these authors goes on to observe, that "hence have resulted those equivocal expressions, which, in some measure, reconcile error and truth. The name of God is among the number. The application of which, by an ancient abuse, had been extended to whatever throughout the universe, excites our admiration, or is excellent among men for influence or power. It is sometimes used in the singular, and sometimes in the plural number; and by its alternate appearance under each of these forms, both the populace and learned were equally satisfied."

This representation is confirmed by the second letter of Plato to Dionysius: "Beware," says he to his royal correspondent, "not to speak publicly on these subjects, i. e. the origin of evil, for what some admire with enthusiasm, is to others an object of contempt and ridicule. *I never have delivered, nor will ever publish in writing, my real sentiments.*" Whether this remarkable avowal had reference to the subjects of philosophy in general, or only to the subject then under discussion, is not perhaps perfectly obvious. But if such be the caution, or rather the duplicity of an instructor, in one instance, we cannot very safely be answerable for his sincerity in another.

If, therefore, the wise men of ancient times had proceeded much further than they did, in the knowledge of things divine; —if, indeed, they had obtained satisfactory light on all subjects, which relate to man as a moral agent, the necessity of revelation would not have been superseded, so long as this knowledge was concealed from the world. Religion is a matter in which all men have an equal interest. If there be a future state, and if there be any connexion between the happiness or misery of that state, and the present habits and actions of men, a knowledge of this concerns the laborer, the mechanic, or even the

* Leland 1. 260.

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slave, not less than those, who move in a sphere more conspicuous and elevated.

It is impossible not to be struck with the difference between the character of heathen sages, and that of Jesus Christ and his apostles, considered as religious guides. The latter do not indeed provoke opposition. They wish not to irritate the passions or to augment the prejudices of men. Still they have nothing of that extravagant prudence, which prevented Plato from discovering his real sentiments. By them the distinction between exoteric and esotoric doctrines, was not observed. They considered all men as moral agents, and as having a great interest at stake. They regarded all, as bewildered in darkness, and in need of having light shed down upon their paths. When a sentiment was viewed by them, as nearly connected with sound morals and piety, they boldly avowed it, and taught it to others, though the passions, and prejudices, and interests of men, were combined for its suppression. Now, whether the Christian religion be true or not, it cannot be denied, that its author and its early preachers acted, in this respect, conformably to the character, in which they appeared; and with a courage, propriety, and dignity, to which we find nothing parallel in the conduct of ancient sages.

IV. A still further reason why the philosophers were inadequate guides, was, that they enjoined on their disciples, even in religion, a rigid conformity to the laws of the country.

The first line in what are denominated the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, contained in the Collectanea Majora, is "Honor the gods, after the manner, which the law prescribes." Col. Maj. 2. 312.

Socrates was certainly of the same opinion. In the former part of this lecture, it was shown that he himself offered sacrifice after the manner of his country. From a dialogue between him and Euthydemus, preserved in the fourth book of Xenophon's Memorabilia, it appears that whatever had been the prescribed worship, he would not have hesitated to comply with it. To this question, "Who is a pious man?" it is answered, "He,

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who worships the gods." It is subjoined, "May each one worship in the manner which he thinks best?" the response is, "No, but agreeably to the law, which directs, what ought to be done."

Similar to this is the direction of Plato, as quoted by the Abbe Barthelemy. (Anach. iv. 253.) It is that the gods are to be worshipped in the manner prescribed by the laws; assigning as a reason, that human wisdom is unable to arrive at any positive knowledge on the subject. "He blames those men, as putting impious notions into the heads of young persons, who taught them, that they ought not to look on those to be gods, whom the law required them to regard as such." He represents it, says Leland, as the duty and office of a legislator to punish those, who do not believe the gods to be such as the law declares them to be. (Lel. 1. 353.)

The same author informs us, that there are some remarkable passages, produced by Augustine, from a work of Seneca, now lost, in which he speaks with great freedom of the vulgar mythology. "Speaking of the images of the gods, he finds fault with their giving them the forms and habits of men, wild beasts, fishes, and a mixture of sexes, and adds, they call those gods, which, if they had life and breath, and a man should meet them unexpectedly, would pass for monsters. He exposes the cruel and lascivious rites, made use of in the worship of several of their deities. And yet declares, that a wise man will observe all these things, not indeed as acceptable to the gods, but as commanded by the laws." (Leland 1. 180.)

Agreeably to this kind of casuistry, individuals were to make no use of their own intellects in judging of the manner, in which divine worship was to be performed; the whole would be under the direction of the civil magistrate; and what was enjoined in one country, would be condemned in another. At this rate, how would it have been possible, that the world should ever be reclaimed from the errors and absurdities of pagan mythology? Who was to reclaim them? The philosophers? But they referred the whole matter to the legislators. By whom then

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were the legislators to be reclaimed? The fact is, that this conduct of the philosophers did a positive injury. It did not merely leave things disordered as they were, but confirmed that disorder.

The philosophers proceeded a step further, if Socrates and Plato may be allowed to represent the rest. The reason, assigned by Plato, why, in his own republic, he prescribed nothing concerning the worship of gods, is, says the author of the Travels of Anacharsis, that the regulation of that matter appertained to the Oracle at Delphi.* And Xenophon represents Socrates, as encouraging Euthydemus, who was anxious to know, how he might make suitable returns to the gods, by reminding him, that the Oracle at Delphi, when consulted, as to what was acceptable to the gods, gave this for an answer, "that they must be worshipped according to the law of the city."†

It appears, therefore, that both these extraordinary men sanctioned, by their own authority, the Delphic imposture. Whether or not they considered the Oracle as an imposture, is to our present purpose, immaterial. The design and tendency of the Oracle was doubtless to favor and perpetuate the established religion. In proportion as the oracles were regarded, the whole system of pagan superstition would gain strength and influence, and the chains of error would be riveted on the human mind. It is, I know, very possible to make a large collection of splendid sentences, weighty and sublime maxims, from the sages of antiquity; and from none more, I presume, than from Socrates, Plato, and Seneca. But can we deny, that what they built up with one hand, they demolished with the other? What availed their noblest speculations and sublimest rhapsodies, if, after all, the religion of human beings must be settled by the Delphic Oracle?

Lastly, we shall be able further to judge how far they were qualified to guide men in the affairs of religion, if we consider the lives of some of them who professed philosophy, and the

* Anach. 3. 113. † Mem. Soc. 4. 3. 16.

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moral maxims transmitted to us in the writings of others. Hegesias, Annicerris, Theodorus, and Bion, were openly profligate. Arcesilaus and Lacydes died by excessive drinking. Not materially different from theirs was the character of Speusippus, who with Annicerris, placed all good in pleasure.

It was a doctrine of Theodorus, "that a man may, upon occasion, commit theft, adultery, or sacrilege, there being nothing in these naturally evil." (Stanley, 146.) Nor can philosophers of more illustrious name be exculpated from the charge of teaching pernicious moral maxims.

Socrates, as it is positively asserted by Salvian, recommended *Uxorem propriam ut nullus habeat. Matrimonia enim cunctis debent esse communia.** Plato, among other directions for the good government of his republic, inculcates, that youths of both sexes should divest themselves, and publicly contend for prizes in the gymnasium.

That community of wives, which, Salvian tells us, was recommended by Socrates, was unquestionably permitted by Plato. He likewise allowed the exposure of feeble or deformed infants. Indeed the object of Plato seems much to have resembled that of Lycurgus; it was to rear citizens and soldiers for the State, though at the expense of individual happiness and social affections. "The children which shall be born, shall be immediately taken from their parents, and lodged in a place, to which their mother shall repair, without knowing them, to distribute, sometimes to one, and sometimes to another, that sustenance which nature has provided for infants, and which they shall not be permitted to reserve exclusively for the fruit of their own affections."†

By various quotations from this celebrated philosopher, it appears, that he permitted, and even on particular occasions, inculcated the violation of truth. (Lel. 2. 249.) Also Stobaeus, περὶ ψεύδους, T. 12. p. 140.

* He lent his own wife, Xantippe to Alcibiades. Potter's Gr. Antiq. 2. 205.

† Anach. 3. 105.

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In that very beautiful piece of pagan morality, the oration of Isocrates to Demonicus, we find the most anti-christian sentiment, "Be not surpassed by your friends in doing them good; or by your enemies, in doing them injuries." A similar precept is found among the Memorabilia of Socrates. I lay no stress on that charge of extreme impurity, which has been brought against this philosopher, by several authors of high reputation. The probability, if one may be permitted to give an opinion on a superficial view of evidence, is, that the accusation is groundless. But there is another charge of no inconsiderable nature, which rests on the authority of Xenophon, who was both his disciple and panegyrist: it is that of giving such advice, in presence of two of his disciples, to Theodota, a profligate woman of Athens, as must be severely condemned by every person, who is even slightly imbued with Christian philosophy.

The subject before us might easily be treated at much greater length. We might here notice that remarkable passage from Cicero, which was quoted in the last lecture. Those who desire further information, may obtain it by consulting Stanley's Lives of the Philosophers, or Enfield's Abridgment of Brucker's History of Philosophy. Enough has been said, it is hoped, to show that the dark cloud of ignorance and error, which lowered over the nations, was not likely to be dispelled by human means. It has been shown, that the philosophers had no sufficient knowledge on the subjects of morality and religion, to direct mankind in the way of truth and salvation; and that even the light, which they did acquire by their superior talents and application, they took no pains to communicate; but by their own example, confirmed the common people in their belief of the current superstitions. But had the philosophers been much less deficient than they were, both in knowledge and moral purity, they would still have been incompetent guides, as they could not have spoken with sufficient authority. Mankind were not in a condition to attend to a long train of reasoning, in support of a new religious theory. Their slavish subordination to their vices and their passions, disqualified them for impartial in-

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quiry, and rendered them averse from it. They needed evidence, addressed directly to their senses. They needed to hear the dumb speak, to see the lame walk, and the dead rise.

What would it be reasonable to expect, as to the contents of a revelation, made under such circumstances, and to such a world? Could it represent mankind, as fond of truth, and observant of moral rectitude? Or must it say, that they are dead in trespasses and sins? Could it represent them, as in need only of some improvement in virtue, such as might naturally result from importunate persuasion? Or must it plainly tell them of passing "from death unto life—from the power of sin and Satan unto God;" of being raised from the dead by the energy of Almighty grace? Would it think, that enough were done, when the beauty and proportion of virtue were represented, and the deformity of vice portrayed? Or would it not rather speak of "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that worketh evil; but glory, honor, and peace to him that worketh good?

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LECTURE XVIII.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

From the sentiments and morals of those who have not enjoyed supernatural light, it has been made, we conceive, sufficiently evident, that such light was to be exceedingly desired by mankind.

If Christianity is in fact, a message from on high, we may be perfectly assured, that proofs are not wanting to show its divine origin. God, who has given to man intellectual powers, must desire that these powers should be exercised. If they are duly exercised, that cannot be considered as truth, in favor of which there is not a preponderancy of evidence. Therefore, should it be found, on examination, that the evidence in favor of the Christian Religion, is less than the evidence against it, the receiving of it would be inconsistent with the duty which we owe to him, by whom our intellectual powers were bestowed. The Gospel does not ask to be believed, as a matter of favor; it professes to give such evidence, that no person, without abusing his rational powers, can refuse belief. Our assent is not begged, but demanded. The Author of Christianity rested his claims to the character of a divine Instructor, entirely on the evidence, which he gave to support them: If I do not the works of my Father, ye believe me not. Again: These things have I spoken before they come to pass, that when they have come to pass, ye might believe that I am he.

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In discussing the subject in hand, I shall take for granted, what no one calls in question, viz. that Christianity now exists. It will be conceded, with almost the same readiness, that Christianity did not always exist. Both believers and infidels allow, that the time has been, when no such religion was known. Were the origin of the gospel uncertain; could no person tell the time when, the place where, nor the circumstances under which the gospel first made its appearance, the question of its truth would be of much more difficult solution, than it is on the supposition that all these circumstances may be known. Frauds may, under some circumstances, be practised with great facility; under different circumstances they cannot pass without detection. If the time and place, in which the Christian religion made its appearance, were uncertain, it must, by consequence, be uncertain whether circumstances were favorable or unfavorable to the ushering in of a fraud. But happily, on this subject, no doubt can with shadow of reason, be pretended. Not only does the Gospel mention, with great particularity, events, dates, the names of emperors, procurators, high priests, etc., but profane writers, such as had no belief in Christianity, unite with its disciples, as to the time, at which this religion took its rise. To an event which is represented as having occurred a very short time before Jesus of Nazareth entered on his public ministry, the following dates are assigned, viz. "The 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being high priests." Pontius Pilate, it is well known, is named in the New Testament as the Roman magistrate, presiding in Judea, when Jesus was crucified.

In the time of the Emperor Trajan, about seventy years from the date assigned by the evangelists to the crucifixion, Pliny was governor of Bithynia, a Roman province, at a great distance from Judea. In this province, Christians had at that time become very numerous, so that the pagan temples were deserted,

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and few victims were purchased. This does not directly prove that Christianity originated at the time which the evangelists assign to its origin; but is precisely what might well have taken place on supposition that it did. Suetonius, in his life of Nero (S. 16), enumerating several acts of this emperor, very briefly notices his punishing the Christians, as a sect attached to "a new and pernicious superstition." It is evident, therefore, that there were Christians at Rome, so early as the time of Nero, whose reign commenced about twenty years after the time, at which, according to the report of Christians, their Master suffered. Tacitus speaks of Christianity as existing at Rome in the time of Nero; but he goes further than this, telling his readers, not only the place where, the person from whom, but the time when the new religion made its appearance. "The founder of the denomination, saith he, was Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his procurator Pontius Pilate. Though checked for a while, it broke out again, and spread not only over Judea, where it originated, but at Rome also." (Tac. Annales.)

Hence appear two facts of considerable importance. First, as to the origin of Christianity, it is not obscure. Friends and enemies agree as to the date;—the reign of Tiberius and the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate; as to the place, viz. Judea; and as to the person from whom it was received, viz. Christ; who by the further agreement of both, died on the cross. The other fact is, that so far the evangelists must be acknowledged by the enemies of the Gospel, not only to have told the truth, but to have been accurate in the statement of facts.

Having ascertained these general, but highly important points, as to the origin of the Gospel, it is fit that we make some inquiry into the state of things which then existed. We shall hence learn, whether the professions of those among whom the Gospel was preached, were for or against it. This question ought first to be considered, as it relates to the Jews, and then as it relates to the Gentiles.

1. As to the Jews. They were, it is true, in expectation of a

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personage called the Messiah. So that the name by which Jesus was designated, could not in itself considered, have been offensive. But to the name, they had affixed certain ideas. The character of Messiah was, in their view, not only the character of a prophet, but of a statesman, and a warrior. As they understood their prophetic writings, Messiah was to be a temporal monarch, a prince whose throne would endure forever, a king whom the Almighty was to establish in Zion, a conqueror who should stain his raiment in the blood of his enemies. He was to be glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength. He was to tread down his foes in anger, and trample them in his fury, and to bring down their strength to the earth.

We can very easily see why the Jews should be, as they certainly were, extremely tenacious of their ideas on this subject. They were a haughty people, who, on account of their supposed relation to God, looked with disdain on the pagan world. They were then in bondage to the Romans. How indignant they were under this yoke of servitude, sufficiently appears by their efforts to throw it off.

It is hence easy to perceive the reason of that earnest desire, which the Jews entertained, of seeing their Christ, whose business, they supposed, would be to head their armies, subdue their oppressors, and augment their national importance and glory. But, in Jesus of Nazareth, none of these expectations could be answered. His family connexions were without influence or wealth. His appearance and manner of life were those of a poor man. His attendants, when he entered upon his public ministry, were of the same kind. With the learned, polite, and powerful, he had no intercourse. To the tents of warriors, the councils of politicians, and the palaces of kings, he neither obtained, nor desired access. From him, no military enterprizes, no revolutions of State were to be expected. To receive such a person as Messiah, would be at once to abandon all the hopes which they had most fondly cherished, and to give up, as lost, their national grandeur and independence. Their ob-

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jections to him as Messiah, must, therefore, have been on this account stronger than their objections to him, considered merely as a teacher sent from God.

Again; The Jews were confidently persuaded of the perpetuity of their own religion. This opinion remains among them at the present day. Those Jews who are now living, expect a Messiah; not, however, to change their religion, but to establish it in greater glory, and to greater extent. Now Jesus and his disciples represented the religion of Moses as a temporary establishment, subservient and preparatory to that system, which he came to introduce. He taught, that the hour was at hand, when the true worshippers should worship the Father, neither in the mountain of Samaria, nor yet at Jerusalem. This doctrine must have been highly offensive to those who had the most bigoted attachment to the ceremonies and splendor of the Jewish law.

In considering the circumstances of the Jewish nation, when Christianity was introduced, it is of some importance to inquire who were the most influential men, and what bearing it was likely to have upon them.

From the constitution of the Jewish religion, very great authority was attached to the priesthood. The scribes and pharisees were likewise in high reputation. As to the priesthood, the condition of that order would be altogether changed by the reception of Christianity. If the Mosaic religion were subservient to the Gospel, it would of course give place to it, and fall into disuse, in proportion as the latter gained ground. But the Levitical priesthood was part of the Mosaic religion, and would of consequence be abolished by the Gospel. Those who belonged to this order had, therefore, a very great interest in opposing it. Besides, the preaching of Christ was, in many instances, personal. He used the greatest freedom in his remarks on the character of the Jewish teachers, and their manner of teaching. He declared them hypocrites, blind leaders of the blind; that they sacrificed the spirit of religion to its form; that they did all their works to be seen of men; that they resembled

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whited sepulchres, which outwardly appeared beautiful, but contained bones and putrefaction. With great emphasis he reiterated woes against the leading characters in the Jewish community. Now the certain consequence of this would be, opposition and hatred from the persons thus exposed; that their influence would be in open hostility to his. This would comprehend not only their own personal efforts, but the efforts of all their dependents, and of all who revered them.

But this is not all. He spake severely, not only of individuals, but of the nation. His instructions were calculated to wound their national pride. He delivered several parables, in which their ingratitude and perverseness were strongly represented, as were the consequent designs of God to humble the nation, by casting them out of his church, and by giving to others those advantages, and that light, which they had abused. He charged the nation with killing the prophets, and stoning those who had been sent unto them; of being habitually guilty of shedding the blood of the righteous; as having been long engaged in filling up the measure of their crimes, which measure he declared was nearly full, and that wrath was coming upon them to the uttermost. His apostles preached in the same manner, speaking of the Jews with great severity. As the former called the generation then present serpents, and a generation of vipers, who could not hope to escape the damnation of hell, his servant Stephen spoke of the nation in general, as stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, who did always resist the Holy Ghost.

Now whatever was the character of Jesus and his successors, it is glaringly evident, that these addresses, and this preaching must have been in the highest degree unacceptable and offensive. It is very evident then, that with the Jewish nation, prepossessions must have been very strong against Christianity.

Though, as the Gospel was first preached and believed among the Jews, it is of first consequence to ascertain their general state, and their probable prepossessions as to it; yet as the Gentiles afterwards received this same Gospel, it must, for a similar

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reason, be important next to inquire, whether their habits, morals, and prejudices, would be for, or against it.

The first idea that would strike a heathen, on having the Christian religion presented to him, would, I should imagine, be that of its direct hostility to his own mythology. Whereas he had been in the habit of acknowledging numerous deities, of various powers, Christianity recognizes but one, even Him, to whom heaven is a throne, and the earth a footstool; whose character is not only different from, but opposite to the character of pagan divinities.

I know that the diversity of worship, prevailing among different nations, was not a matter of mutual offence. One system of worship, they supposed, might be best for one nation, and a different system for another. Now if the different systems of paganism were friendly enough to each other, why, you may ask, might not all be equally favorable to Christianity, and suffer it to exist among the rest? I answer, that Christianity cannot exist among the rest. It cannot exist, but by the detruction of the rest. It acknowledges no respect for them. It refuses all communion with them. It avows their destruction to be its object. If itself be true, they cannot be true. It speaks of the idols of the heathen, as vanity and a lie.

But not only would a heathen, to whom the Christian religion was presented, perceive that he must, on the reception of it, reject entirely the system in which he has been educated, but his pride would be wounded, by considering the stupidity, which Christianity attributes to the votaries of pagan worship. He would perceive, that those who embrace the former, must view the latter not only as altogether false, but most absurd, and the reception of it, as degrading to a rational creature. Nothing is more offensive to men, than to have their intelligence impeached. Allow that a man's opinions are plausible, and that his reasoning in support of them is ingenious, and he will, with some patience, hear you call them in question and argue against them; but the moment you represent them as absurd and stupid, his patience is exhausted.

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Further: There must have been a prejudice on the minds of the heathen against the Gospel, on account of the nation in which it originated. The Jews had, at some periods, been distinguished by their power, and the commanding attitude which they took among the nations of the earth. But with the loss of their morals, they had lost their national consequence; and, at the time when the religion of Christ was propagated, they were as much despised as hated. Whenever they are mentioned by Roman poets, it is done contemptuously.

The Gospel must likewise have met opposition from political considerations. Allow, if you please, that statesmen were indifferent to all religion, in itself considered; that they had as thorough a dislike and even contempt, as they ought, for that which their countrymen professed. But this religion had an important connexion with their civil institutions. Modes and days of worship were prescribed by law. So far as civil laws enjoined pagan worship, Christianity opposed them. It had therefore the appearance of sedition. A civilian, whether he believes religion or not, will contend earnestly for it, when it can be used as a convenient engine of State. Men of influence in the nation would not, therefore, look with indifference on the Christian religion. We do not judge of this matter wholly from the nature of the case, but from facts, and those too, which are recorded by heathen writers. "In Bithynia," says the elegant writer already quoted, "the temples have been almost deserted; the sacred rites have been for a long time suspended; and of the many victims brought for sacrifice, scarce a purchaser could be found." (Plinii Epistolæ.) Surely no small degree of prejudice would be excited against a religion, by which these effects were produced. Such was the fact. A persecution against this new religion was commenced, not by a misguided rabble, not by some ferocious, ill-appointed magistrate, who gloried in the exhibition of his power; but by Pliny, a man of mild temper, courtly manners, and a highly cultivated mind. His own account of the matter is as follows: "As to those who were brought before me as Christians, I pursued this method: I asked them

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whether they were Christians. If they confessed, I mixed threats with my interrogations, which were once and again repeated. If they persevered, I ordered them to be led to execution." For which he assigns this extraordinary reason: Neque enim dubitabam, qualecunque esset, quod faterentur, pervicaciam certe, et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri. The emperor, in his answer to Pliny, well approves what the latter had done; but, in consideration of the favorable account which he had received of Christian morals, directs, that Christians should not be sought for, but only punished with death when convicted. It hence appears, what a strong antipathy there was to the Gospel, not only among the lower classes, but among the most elevated and learned statesmen. The priests among the Greeks and Romans, were numerous and powerful. The Roman pontifices were originally chosen from among the patricians. They were occasionally magistrates, and sometimes invested with consular authority.* While the government was a monarchy, certain religious rites were to be performed by the king. In later ages, after the republic had expired, Augustus himself assumed the office of Pontifex Maximus. It is not difficult to see, that immense influence must have been attached to a religious establishment, to preside over which, was an object of imperial ambition. What a formidable host would such an establishment present, to impede the progress of Christianity!—a religion propagated by a few men, without either influence, wealth, eloquence, or literature.

The apostles, and all who believed Christianity, must have considered these pagan priests, as blind leaders of the blind;—as men perfectly destitute of true religion themselves, and leading a corrupt world to perdition. Nor was this opinion concealed. When the priest of Jupiter, at Lystra, had brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and would have joined with the people in doing sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, as gods, who had descended in the likeness of men, these Christian apostles did not

* Adam's Rom. Ant. 290, 291. Middleton's Life of Cicero, 2. p. 13, 151. 3. 371. London, 1801.

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fail to manifest, in the presence of the people and their priest, both compassion and contempt for their superstition: They rent their clothes, and ran in among the multitude, crying out, and saying, sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you; and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities, unto the living God, who made heaven and earth.

The pagan priests well knew, not only that those who embraced the Christian religion had the most unfavorable opinion both of them and their ministrations, but that in proportion to the prevalence of this new religion, their own influence and emoluments would be destroyed.

But the ministers of religion were not the only persons whose interest would be affected by the prevalence of the Gospel. The common artizans had a similar reason for opposing it. To construct ornaments, images, or instruments, used in pagan worship, was a lucrative branch of business, which must cease, of course, as the religion which required them fell into disuse. What loss of interest was apprehended by certain classes of mechanics, from the introduction of the gospel, appears by the tumult which the apostle witnessed at Ephesus: A certain man named Demetrius, a silver-smith, who made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen, whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said: Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth; moreover, ye see and hear, that not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they are no gods which are made with hands; so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also, that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these things they were full of wrath.

There was another class of men, concerning whom it may be expected that something should be said. I mean those of a studious, inquisitive turn, who were taught by reason and reflec-

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tion, to despise the current superstition; and who, leading a retired life, were not so much engaged in political affairs, as to have any great interest in crushing the gospel, on account of its bearing on civil establishments. These men, as they were in the habit of viewing all systems of religion with which they were acquainted, as fable or fraud, must have been prejudiced against religion in general, and by consequence, against Christianity as a particular kind of religion.

The following account of what took place at Athens corresponds perfectly with what might have been expected in the circumstances to which it relates: Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and the Stoics, encountered Paul. And some said, What will this babbler say; for he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; and this they said because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.

Besides, these philosophical men, viewing all religion as equally false, would by no means be willing to hazard any civil commotions by exchanging one falsehood for another; that is, though they could not be supposed to take the same interest in the permanency of civil establishments, with those who were employed in the administration of government; yet they had with every other citizen a common interest in avoiding convulsions and revolutions. They would not be willing that the public tranquillity should be disturbed, and their own with it, by the conflicts of two theories, of which they believed neither.

Again, there are other traits in Christianity which rendered it peculiarly uninviting. Its claims could not be examined merely as matter of common history, which may be determined either way without affecting the personal interest of the inquirer. The pagan to whom this religion was proposed, well knew that if its truth were established, very distressing apprehensions could not be avoided as to the eternal destiny of all his ancestors. He must have known that if the gospel were true, it was, to use the words of another, "tremendously true;"—that his own state was that of disobedience and guilt, and that a punishment without mitigation or end awaited himself, unless a radical change

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should be effected in his heart, opinions and character. The heathen would in fact hate to believe this new religion.

A reason why heathen of every rank must have been prejudiced against the gospel, is that it declared open war with their passions and vices. It taught a system of morals altogether different from that to which they had been accustomed. Patience under sufferings and the forgiveness of injuries, were in Roman estimation the doctrine of a coward. The possession of these qualities was thought to be evidence of a debased, ignoble spirit.

But in the Christian religion, it is well known, this meekness of temper is enjoined as a virtue of great price: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath.

The feelings of the human heart in general are directly opposed to these precepts. They would therefore be offensive both to Jews and Gentiles, but especially to the latter, the tendency of whose religion was rather to encourage, than suppress the most criminal feelings of a depraved heart. The most unbounded licentiousness, we have seen actually prevailed among the pagans. Sensuality was sanctioned by a rabble of profligate deities. Christianity on the contrary condemns not actual impurity alone, but the unchaste heart, and sensual purposes. It teaches us that the very thoughts of foolishness are sin.

Some of the causes of opposition to Christianity previously mentioned, had influence only with particular classes. The operations of the last would be universal. The various ranks of

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society would therefore make common cause to crush a religion by which the passions of all were restrained, or counteracted.

No one is ignorant, that the facility with which reports are circulated, depends greatly on a previous state of mind. We are glad to believe some things; we are sorry to believe others. When new doctrines in morality and religion are proposed to us, which doctrines well accord with some previous opinions, with our passions, or interest, we do not in order to conviction require very strong evidence. On the contrary, if the doctrines proposed are wholly at variance with our wishes and favorite pursuits, if they cannot be admitted without exhibiting a prospect of danger, without showing the necessity of abandoning pursuits which we love, and embracing those from which we have the strongest aversion, every inch of ground will be contested, until the evidence becomes so strong and overwhelming as to be irresistible.

The circumstances, last described, must have been those, under which both Jews and heathen first heard the gospel preached. This gospel required of the Jews, the dereliction of their favorite hope of national glory. It required of them to consider the Mosaic law in a light far different from that in which it had been previously viewed. It declared that however warm might be their attachment to this law, if no moral change were produced on the heart, their future punishment would be more severe than that of the heathen, whom they pitied and despised. In the creed of the Gentile, it scarcely left a single article standing. It required him to abandon his gods, his temples, his rites, and festivals; to adopt a course of moral behavior, the reverse of that which had heretofore been considered innocent; and to possess a moral habit, from which this new, but unpopular course of living would naturally result.

Now very great multitudes, both of Jews and Gentiles, did receive this new religion. This appears not only from the Acts of the apostles, which the infidels might be particularly cautious of believing, but from the heathen testimony already adduced, which declares that multitudes at Jerusalem, at Rome, and in

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far distant Roman provinces, forsook ancient religions, and embraced the new. These multitudes must therefore have had what they supposed to be very strong evidence in support of the gospel. What evidence this was, and what opportunities they had of canvassing it, will be matter of inquiry in the next lecture.

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LECTURE XIX.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

It was shown, in the last lecture, that Jews and Gentiles were so far from being predisposed to embrace Christianity, that the prejudices of both against it, must have been numerous and violent.

We proceed to show, 1. That Jesus of Nazareth, and his apostles professed to give the evidence of miracles in proof of the religion which they taught. 2. That all who received this religion, must have believed that such miracles were wrought. 3. I shall endeavor to show, that the miracles thus pretended, and thus believed, were in fact, wrought.

In discoursing on the subject before us, I consider it as of little importance to define the term miracle; as it would, at the present day, be allowed by those who doubt, or reject Christianity, that the works attributed to Christ and his apostles, such as the curing of the blind and deaf, and the raising of the dead, whether we express those works by the term miracle, or any other, were sufficient, if in fact they occurred, to establish the divine commission of those who performed them. It is generally, I believe universally, conceded, that if the accounts which the evangelists give of the resurrection of Lazarus and of Jesus Christ, be true, the religion connected with these accounts, can no longer be denied. The stand taken by infidels, is to deny that the works which the evangelists relate were ever wrought.

Having made these few remarks, we proceed, as was proposed, to show, 1. That Jesus Christ and his apostles professed

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to give the evidence of miracles or mighty works, such as curing diseases, and raising the dead, etc., in proof of that religion which they taught.

As Christ professed to come in the character of him whom the prophets called Messiah, it was absolutely necessary, that he should profess to perform the works which the prophets attributed to Messiah. Now, the prophecies attribute to Messiah miraculous powers; particularly specifying the works which this illustrious personage should perform. It follows of course, that Jesus of Nazareth must have professed the power of performing these works.

As we have shown the prejudices of the Jews against Christianity to have been strong and numerous, we have inferred, that the evidence in support of it must have been of a very peculiar kind, to procure their assent. We cannot conceive any evidence of this peculiar nature, unless it arose from miracles or prophecy; the former of which, would have been at any particular time, more striking than the latter; and at least, as credible in the view of sceptics.

Celsus, who wrote against the Christian religion about a century after the gospels were published, attributes the miracles of Jesus to magic. Certainly he would not have made this concession, as to the fact, unless claims to a miraculous power had been set up by the author and propagators of this religion. That an enemy of Christianity should allow that miracles were wrought in its favor, when its friends pretended no such thing, is certainly incredible.

Having exhibited this evidence, which is independent of the truth of revealed religion, to prove that Christ and his apostles professed to establish their religion on the ground of miracles, it cannot be improper to show how well those addresses, attributed to them by the writers of the New Testament, correspond with this account. If they did profess miraculous powers, as the nature of the case and the concession of Celsus unite in showing, it is reasonable to presume, that the mighty works, performed either by their master or themselves, would

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be appealed to, whenever they addressed the people on the subject of the new religion.

That Christ himself professed to work miracles is asserted in a passage already quoted: If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. Again: The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. Peter is reported to have begun his address, on the day of Pentecost, in the following words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you. In another address, attributed to the same person, we find this language: Ye have killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we all are witnesses. Here, you see, the miraculous event of Christ's resurrection is asserted, and the person speaking professes to be a witness of it. The same apostle, in preaching to Cornelius and his company, is further represented as declaring: How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and at Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly.

Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, places the whole truth of the gospel on the event of Christ's resurrection: If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ.

2. It requires little effort to prove our next proposition; viz. that all who received this religion, must have believed that the miracles asserted, were in fact wrought.

Miracles, we have seen, constituted a kind of evidence, to which Christ and his apostles continually appealed. They did not desire that men should receive them as teachers sent from God, if they performed not such miracles as none could perform merely by human power. That any person should have believed them divinely sent, at the same time believing that

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they failed in that very evidence, on which they rested their whole claim to a divine mission, is a supposition palpably absurd. How could they have been viewed as messengers of divine truth, by those who knew that they pretended to work miracles, but failed in the attempt? When Jesus said: If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not, surely he would have been taken at his word; and all who were not convinced of his mighty works, must have rejected his religion. When Paul consented expressly to be taken for a false witness of God, if his Master were not risen from the dead, do you believe that any person, rejecting the fact of our Saviour's resurrection, could have regarded Paul, as a true witness; and could have been willing to forego his pleasures, counteract his prejudices, and meet the world in opposition, from a regard to the doctrines of Paul? No. If, after making such appeals, they wrought no miracles, they ought in conscience to have been treated, either as men the most depraved, or the most bewildered.

3. The next object of this lecture is to show that the miracles, which Christ and his apostles professed to work, and on the ground of which, the gospel was believed, were indeed wrought.

This gospel was first proclaimed at the place where, and at the time when, these mighty works were said to have been wrought. These facts are of great consequence. If the new religion had been first preached in some place far distant from that in which its author was said to have performed his miracles, especially on supposition of there being little intercourse between the two places, deception would have been much less improbable than it could be, as circumstances actually were. Were we informed of an uncommon event now occurring in some place on the western coast of America, it is evident that our opportunities of ascertaining the truth or falsehood of the report would be far less than theirs, in whose village the extraordinary occurrence is said to have happened. If the gospel had not been first preached in Judea, but in Asia Minor, or Greece, by persons who did not themselves perform supernatural works, it would have been a very natural inquiry, Why this new religion

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was not preached in the place where the miracles were wrought, and where the evidence was much more striking than it could be to those who lived at a great distance. It would not have been easy to answer such a question, nor to supply the defect of evidence arising from this circumstance.

Suppose again, that it had been first preached at Jerusalem, where Jesus spent much of his time, but not till a hundred years after his decease; in that case, all his contemporaries would have been dead; no appeals could have been made to living witnesses; and it would have been a very perplexing question, why this religion was not preached at the time when its author was living, and when the miracles, said to have been wrought by him to prove it, were subject to examination.

Jesus Christ did not, for proof of his doctrines, rely on some story of miracles formerly wrought. He claimed attention to that which he was ready to exhibit before their eyes: If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. When his apostles went forth they had a very consistent account to give; namely, that their master wrought miracles, and at the same time preached the religion which those miracles were designed to establish. When they declared this, they wrought similar miracles in support of the same religion.

You readily perceive, what advantage was given to those who were disposed to examine the claims of Christ and his apostles. When they would persuade men that they had received a divine commission by making an appeal to supernatural works; the next inquiry would be, on what day? at what place? and before what persons, these works were done? If the day, the place, and the spectators, could not be pointed out, their claims would be disregarded; or, if they had mentioned a large number of persons as witnesses, and had specified the time and place, and it were found, on inquiry, that no such event had happened at that place; that the persons named as witnesses, knew nothing of the matter; not only would their claims to miraculous powers have sunk, but their presumption and impiety would have been openly exposed.

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Another remarkable circumstance relating to these miracles was, that they were wrought publicly, and most of them were of such a nature, that there could be no difficulty in ascertaining facts. Some of these we will particularly mention.

1. The feeding of more than five thousand men with five loaves of bread and two fishes. It surely will not be said that these five thousand persons were deceived, and really thought that they had eaten, when they had not. That would scarcely have been a less miracle, than the one we believe to have been wrought. Yet this story was certainly told at the time, when Christ and his disciples were preaching. It was either true, or it was not. If it was true the question is decided. Jesus Christ must have been what he professed to be. If it was not true, why did none of five thousand people contradict the report, and thus cover with confusion those by whom it was circulated? Suppose a person should come to this place in character of a messenger, divinely sent, and to support his high claims, should assert that on such a day of the preceding week, he did, at a few miles distance, give competent refreshment with a few loaves of bread, to a hungry multitude, consisting of several thousands. I ask, whether the report would gain credit? If any attention were paid to so strange a representation, if any person discovered a disposition to believe it, application would be made to the persons reported to have been present, whose denial of the fact would completely settle the question. But if the propagator of this new faith were unable to name any persons from so vast a multitude, who could testify that they had been fed in the manner pretended, that circumstance would of itself arrest the progress of his imposture.

Now if the Christian account of the five loaves and five thousand was not true, what reason can be assigned why its falsehood was not in a similar manner detected? Another report of a like miracle, viz. the feeding of four thousand with seven loaves, could, had it not been true, have been proved false with the same facility.

2. Another miracle is related in the following words: Behold

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there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death; I pray thee come and lay thine hands on her, that she be healed, and she shall live. And Jesus went with him, and much people followed, and thronged him. Before his arrival, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain, who said: Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue: Be not afraid; only believe. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand and saith unto her, Damsel, arise. And straightway she arose and walked.

From this account it appears, that there was a collection of people at the house, where this transaction occurred. There was, at the house a tumult; and those who wept and wailed greatly. There had been a collection in the chamber, where the dead person lay; for it is said that Christ put them all out. These many witnesses were fully persuaded, that the maiden was in fact dead; for when Jesus, knowing that she would soon be raised, observed to the people that she only slept; they not apprehending his meaning, laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

In the cure of the young man of Nain, it may be observed that the miracle was wrought immediately on Jesus' arrival at the city: When he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out. I mention this circumstance to show that there could have been no plan concerted between Jesus and the young man, that the latter should feign himself dead to increase the fame of the former. This affair took place before a large concourse of people, who were assembled at the funeral. For we read, that his mother was a widow;

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and that much people of the city was with her. All these persons could not have been deceived. They certainly knew whether they were carrying a corpse to be buried; whether Jesus came and touched the bier; and whether the person revived, sat up, and spoke, and was delivered to his mother. Either, therefore, this multitude of people corrupted their consciences for no reward, and propagated a falsehood without temptation, or else the miracle was actually wrought.

3. We next consider the resurrection of Lazarus. He had been dead four days, and was buried. In this case, as in the other, Jesus had been absent from the place, in which the person was, whom he raised to life. He had been in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, and did not return into Judea until Lazarus was dead. This circumstance precludes any supposition of fraudulent concert. There could be no secrecy in this matter. It occurred in the presence of a large number of people. Many Jews, it is said, were present. Neither was there any possibility of being deceived. The people that were with Jesus, when Lazarus was raised, bear record. Lazarus was known and conversant among the Jews after his resurrection. We find him a little after at an entertainment. His life was sought by the chief priests, because that by reason of him, many went away and believed on Jesus. Now whatever doubts a sceptic may entertain as to the fact of the resurrection, it cannot be questioned that such a report was in circulation at the time; and that those who espoused the Christian cause represented this fact as a proof of his Messiahship, or at least of his being a teacher sent from God. But if the report had not been true, nothing would have been more easy, than to show it false. If Lazarus did not rise again, the persons who reported that he did, would have been required to exhibit him. If they were unable to do this, the story would have been rejected. Besides, those persons said to have been present would have been called to give testimony, who, instead of proving the fact, would have proved the falsehood of those who reported it.

It will hardly be suggested, I think, that a general apathy

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prevailed on the subject; that no person felt a sufficient interest to institute an examination. The contrary of this must be evident from the nature of the case, as well as from the temper manifested by the early enemies of the gospel. The religion, we have shown, must have been offensive, both to Jews and Gentiles. They must have regarded its prevalence with indignation and regret, and have used all means to arrest its progress. And surely the most direct way of doing this would have been to destroy the evidence on which its advocates endeavored to support it.

Having shown that the works of Christ were public, and exposed to examination, we come next to consider the miracle of his own resurrection.

That Christ was crucified is rendered certain, we have seen by pagan, as well as evangelical testimony. That they who first preached the gospel asserted the resurrection of its author, is equally beyond dispute. As they preached the resurrection at Jerusalem, where Christ was crucified, there was a fair opportunity of examining the fact. The report, if false, might have been proved so, either by producing the body, or by appealing to those who were said to have seen Jesus after his resurrection. That there was among those concerned in his crucifixion a sufficient inclination to discredit all accounts of his being raised, is obvious at first sight. The Jews well knew that nothing could raise this religion so rapidly, as a belief that its founder rose from the dead. The same temper, therefore, which induced them to put him to death, would operate with increased violence to prevent a belief in his resurrection. Why did they not then produce the dead body, and thus confute the story of its having revived? They would have done this had it been in their power. They did not do it; therefore it was not in their power. But it would have been in their power had the body remained in the sepulchre. Therefore the body was, by some means, removed. The story to which the infidel must resort, is of course the same, which was told by the Jews: The disciples came by night and stole him away.

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That we may duly estimate this story, it is necessary to consider the circumstances attending our Lord's burial. He was deposited in a sepulchre hewn out of a rock. This circumstance rendered it impossible for his disciples to undermine the sepulchre and convey away his body privately. His predictions that he should rise, had been reported to the rulers, who, in consequence of this information, commanded a watch to be stationed at the tomb, at the mouth of which was rolled a large stone. Now let us consider the improbability of the body's being removed. Why did not the guard prevent such removal? The story is that they fell asleep. This is highly improbable, because of the danger into which their lives would be brought by such inattention. When the jailor, at Philippi, supposed that Paul and Silas, then his prisoners, had escaped, he was so confident of being required to answer for it with his life, that he drew his sword with design to kill himself immediately, and thus anticipate a capital punishment. How then would the whole watch dare to indulge in sleep on such a post? But suppose they did fall asleep, how could they give any information as to the manner in which the body was removed? They might testify that the body was in the tomb, when they fell asleep, and that it was absent at the time of their waking. But how it was removed, whether living or dead, they could give no better account, than persons at the distance of a thousand miles. Again, when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were going to the sepulchre, they inquired who should roll away the stone, knowing that they themselves were unable to do it. Now, it is incredible that centinels should not have been awakened by the rolling of so large a stone, together with the bustle of descending into the sepulchre, and taking thence a dead body.

But there is another way in which the Jews might have shown the story of the resurrection false, if it indeed were so. I mean, the requiring of proof. When any preached that Jesus had risen, the hearers must have asked immediately, who saw him after his resurrection? If none saw him, the story would have

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been rejected, and those who spread it, would have been covered with confusion. But witnesses were not wanting. The religion prevailed in spite of every obstacle. The work was of God, and could not be impeded.

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LECTURE XX.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

In the last lecture, mention was briefly made of the resurrection of Christ, as proving the Christian religion. Considering the importance, attached to this event both by Christians and infidels, it may seem to require a more lengthened and minute examination.

This I am the more inclined to attempt for having perused, in a posthumous work of Bishop Horsley, four discourses on our Lord's Resurrection, which not only exhibit, in a luminous manner, the arguments which are commonly used on that subject, but contain others, which so far as I know, originated with that illustrious prelate.

The resurrection of our Lord, like other events of former times, must be supported by evidence. In proportion to the strength of this evidence must be our confidence in the fact. The witnesses, who testify to this fact, are his eleven disciples. Written testimony has been transmitted from two of them. Similar testimony is received from two witnesses who were not of this number.

The confidence which we have in testimony depends, it is well known, on the three following conditions; 1. The number of witnesses. 2. Their testimony, i. e. their knowledge of the subject, to which their testimony relates. 3. Their integrity.

In reference to all these particulars, the evidence of our Saviour's resurrection is conceived to be plenary.

1. The number of witnesses. Facts are thought to be well established, before civil tribunals, when two or three persons of

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honest character, and competent knowledge, appear to support them. In the present case, the number of witnesses is eleven. If the fact is not proved by the testimony of such a number, neither would it be were the number increased. If these persons are competent and upright, the fact is proved; if they are wanting in either of these respects, or if they were dishonest, or if not dishonest, yet if, through want of acquaintance with the matter in hand, they were incompetent to give testimony concerning it, a greater number would be of no advantage.

2. We are in the next place, then, to consider whether the witnesses were competent, i. e. whether they had sufficient knowledge of the subject concerning which they testified.

As to the resurrection of Christ, under whose instruction they had been, and whose intimacy they had enjoyed for three years, they were amply qualified to bear witness. Their long intimacy with Jesus rendered them fully acquainted with his works, doctrines, habits, and places of resort,—with his person, motions, countenance, voice, and gestures. If they were not, it is certain that no persons could have been competent to bear witness as to the fact of our Lord's resurrection. Their competency to testify on this subject, should, I think, be viewed in connexion with the knowledge which they must have had, of their Master's works, and doctrines. If they deposed falsely in the one case, they must have done the same in the other, notwithstanding the impossibility of their being deceived as to his character, and as to the nature and reality of those works, which he claimed to have wrought by the finger of God. The only remaining question must therefore relate to their integrity. Did the eleven disciples believe their own testimony; or were they wittingly and deliberately, false witnesses of God, in testifying that he raised up Christ from the dead, whom he raised not up?

Some opinion, I believe, is always formed concerning the veracity of a witness, by the manner in which his deposition is made. There may be an appearance of art, a fear of falling into self-contradictions, an apprehension of being suspected, or

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disbelieved. On the other hand there may be an air of frankness, a simple, unsuspecting manner; the absence of precaution, or fear of being discredited. That the latter, and not the former, is the manner of the evangelists, will be allowed by every candid man, whatever may be his opinion of the Christian faith. If these writers did exhibit their testimony artfully, it was art so consummate, as to have from beginning to end, and without a single exception, the aspect of simplicity. Such dexterity, especially where the testimony is of great length, and involves many facts, and often alludes to places, names, dates, customs, and events, whether public or private, is allowed to be of no easy acquisition, even to persons of superior address and education. That the evangelists, educated and circumstanced as they were, should all have acquired this dexterity, is what no man, who values his character for observation and judgment, would readily assert.

When any person reads the evangelical history, it is next to impossible to resist the conviction, that the writers themselves, believed what they wrote.

But the principal argument by which we would establish the veracity of these eleven witnesses, who testified the resurrection of their master, is, that to have given false testimony in this particular case, would have been opposite to every known principle in our natures. Men do not utter a falsehood merely for its own sake. They do not lie in order to procure for themselves present, inevitable loss. Good, and not evil, is the object of human search. But the witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus, did, in consequence of their testimony, not only maintain lives of eminent virtue, but exposed themselves to opposition, reproach, persecution, torture, and death. To propagate the story of the resurrection, they relinquished all which human nature loves. They encountered all, which it cannot view with other emotions than those of aversion and terror. Nor were these sufferings in any degree unexpected. The adventure, in which they engaged, was not one which had, at first, an alluring aspect, but which was more hazardous in its nature,

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or less fortunate in its issue, than had been contemplated. Jesus did not leave them doubtful what treatment they were to receive in consequence of their attachment to him: They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But if you suppose that on account of some strange incredulity or dulness, they either did not believe, or did not understand this language, I ask what must have been their expectations when they saw the fate of their Master. The opposition which his doctrines encountered, brought him to a public execution. When they directed their eyes towards his cross, they saw, as if portrayed in living colors, the treatment which they were to receive in consequence of their attachment to his person, and their attempts to promulgate his religion.

Now unless they believed their own testimony; i. e. unless they believed that the Lord had risen indeed, what inducement had they to spread such a report, and solemnly to adhere to it in the face of every danger? How could they, without an object, rush upon the sword, or throw themselves into the flames of persecution? Should an individual do this who was not under the influence of deep insanity, it would, I think, be a case without parallel in the history of human disorders. But this was done, if the eleven disciples did not believe their own testimony, not by an individual only, but by them all. They gave the same testimony, when together at Jerusalem, and when preaching separately in distant provinces of the Roman empire.

Not only is it incredible, that they should engage in an enterprise in opposition to every motive known to influence human conduct, but that all should have persisted in giving the same testimony, in whatever assembly, in whatever country, in whatever circumstances, they had an opportunity of introducing the subject; that no one, when separated from the rest, and uncertain whether their constancy and hardiness in crime would sustain them, should have betrayed the secret; but that every one should be willing to suffer even to the last extremity, in favor of the fraud, while he had not the poor consolation of hav-

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ing his fellow conspirators to witness his fortitude, nor even knew but that some of them, allured by reward, subdued by suffering, or impelled by conscience, had already disclosed the whole affair, and thereby consigned to merited infamy both the attempt and its abettors.

But further, as any one of the witnesses might have avoided toils, shame, and persecution, by throwing off the mask himself, and showing the whole story of the resurrection to be an imposture, so might he, by these means, have procured for himself great advantages. Adversaries to the Christian religion were not wanting, who would have amply rewarded him for such a discovery. No one who considers the punishments endured by those who embraced the gospel can doubt the interest felt, both by Jews and Gentiles in its extermination.

Nor ought it to escape our notice, that if the story of the resurrection was a fraud, it must, from the nature of the case, have been very suddenly contrived and adopted. Its success must have depended on the secrecy and aid of a large number of men. Had one betrayed the rest, success would have been impossible, and the rest would have been the victims of their folly and guilt.

It appears then, that the eleven disciples propagated the story of the resurrection, not only in the midst of dangers and sufferings on the one side, but in contempt of alluring advantages on the other; that they persisted in telling the same story at all times, and in all places; that they did this with the greatest apparent simplicity, ardor, and solemnity, as if they considered the messages which they brought as intimately, and certainly connected with the interest of man as an accountable, immortal being; that not one of them betrayed any compunction of conscience, any wavering in his resolutions to suffer for Christ's sake, but all were willing to embrace death in its most hideous form, with seeming triumph, in confident hope of an ample reversion in the kingdom of God.

No rational account can be given of these facts, but on the supposition that the disciples honestly deposed according to the

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dictates of their own consciences; in other words, that they believed their own declarations.

It has now been proved that the evidence of our Lord's resurrection is deficient in nothing. Eleven was a number of witnesses more than sufficient. They were perfectly competent, i. e. well acquainted with the subject concerning which they testified. Their testimony was of such a nature, and given under such circumstances, that it could have proceeded from nothing, but from a conviction of its truth. "It is a very singular circumstance in this testimony," says Bishop Horsley, "that it is such as no length of time can diminish. It is founded on the universal principles of human nature; upon maxims which are the same in all ages, and operate with equal strength in all mankind, under all varieties of temper, and habit of constitution. So long as it shall be contrary to the first principles of the human mind to delight in falsehood for its own sake; so long as it shall be true, that no man willingly propagates a lie to his own detriment and to no purpose; so long it will be certain that the apostles were serious and sincere in the assertion of our Lord's resurrection. So long as it shall be absurd to suppose that twelve men could all be deceived in the person of a friend, with whom they had lived three years, so long will it be certain that the apostles were competent to judge of the truth and reality of the fact, which they asserted. So long as it shall be in the nature of man for his own interest and ease to be dearer than that of another to himself; so long it will be an absurdity to suppose that twelve men should persevere for years in the joint attestation of a lie, to the great detriment of every individual of the conspiracy, and without any joint, or separate advantage, when any of them had it in their power, by a discovery of the fraud, to advance his own fame and fortune, by the sacrifice of nothing more dear to him than the reputation of the rest; and so long will it be incredible that the story of our Lord's resurrection was a fiction, which the twelve, to mention no greater number, with unparalleled fortitude, and great folly, conspired to support."

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Against the evidence, on which this fact is supported, an objection has been brought from the manner in which it is mentioned by St. Peter in the speech which he made at the house of Cornelius: Him, i. e. Jesus, God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but to the witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him, after he arose from the dead.

The objection is this: They who were to be witnesses were, it seems, selected persons; selected too, it may be said, for their friendship to the person and doctrines of Jesus. If the resurrection was a fact, why was it not more public, and submitted to other witnesses?

Previously to examining this objection, I would remark, that if in the circumstance objected against, there is any thing seemingly unfavorable to the fact of our Saviour's resurrection, the mention of it, which was wholly gratuitous, shows that the author was wholly devoid of art; that he set down things as they were, without considering what would, or what would not, give to his narrative the air of probability.

Duly to estimate the objection, it is necessary to consider, with what limitation the words of St. Peter are to be understood: Not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen of the Lord. The whole number of those who saw Jesus after he had risen from the dead was not small. He appeared to the women who visited the sepulchre, to his eleven disciples, and as St. Paul assures us, to above five hundred brethren at once, the greater part of whom were alive at the time of his writing his first epistle to the Corinthians. Still our Saviour did not maintain, either among his disciples or others, that freedom of intercourse to which he had been accustomed before his crucifixion. He did not appear in the streets, in the synagogues, or in the temple of Jerusalem. Nor did he, during the forty days of his residence on earth, take up his abode among his disciples, nor converse with them in that unreserved manner, which had been usual on former occasions. Yet, as has been remarked, the number of witnesses was by no means small. That was not done in pri-

vate, which was done in the presence of between five and six hundred persons.

But you will ask, perhaps, why he did not appear to all the people; or if not to all, why were the witnesses selected, a circumstance calculated to excite suspicion.

In the first place I ask, who are meant when you speak of all the people? Do you mean every individual of every description in Jerusalem? Do you mean that our Saviour should have gone into every street, and into every house in the whole city? But why should his appearance be confined to Jerusalem? May you not as well inquire why he did not show himself in every town, and village, and dwelling-place of Judea? But why should this favor be granted exclusively to Judea? why should it not extend to all the inhabitants of Samaria? And if to Samaria, why not to Galilee, where so many of his discourses had been delivered, and so many of his miracles performed? Why, indeed, as he was designed to be a light to enlighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the glory of his people Israel, was his presence and ministry limited to the Jewish nation? Why did he not preach in all places of the Roman empire, and confirm by appearing after his resurrection, the doctrines which he had preached before his death?

Unlimited inquiries of such a nature may be made concerning either the resurrection of our Saviour, or any other event that ever occurred.

But even should we allow that it was to have been expected that our Lord after his resurrection, would appear in Jerusalem as publicly as he had previously done, what will be the result? Will it follow that Jesus did not rise from the dead, because, though there is substantial and abundant evidence that he did, that evidence differs either in kind or degree from what we might have expected? In the constitution of the world, and in the ordinary succession of events, things are by no means as we should have previously anticipated. The world is not such, nor governed in such a manner, as we should have presumed. Are we hence to conclude that God did not make the world? But as

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the truth of Christianity is made to depend on the resurrection of its Author, you plausibly and correctly observe, that strong evidence of the fact may justly be required. I answer, that strong evidence may indeed be required; and strong evidence, we have shown, was actually given. Is this strong evidence to be rejected, because still stronger evidence may be imagined? Was it ever known that the testimony of five credible witnesses was rejected, because six or seven are more than five? Would it be rational to disbelieve the eleven apostles, deposing concerning a subject of which their knowledge must have been complete, and concerning which they had the strongest conceivable inducements not to utter a falsehood, merely because that twenty, fifty, or a thousand, are more than eleven? Would it be rational to deny that our Lord appeared to any after his resurrection, or that he ever rose from the dead, because, though he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, he might have appeared to twice or thrice that number?

What expectation might have been entertained as to the evidence which would be likely to accompany the resurrection of Christ, had the event been contemplated before it occurred, I know not. Doubtless different persons would have formed different opinions. The only question with which we are concerned is, whether the evidence is sufficient. If this has been made to appear, to require more is wholly impertinent. Whatever had been the number and condition of the witnesses, it might still have been imagined that they ought to have been different.

These remarks have reference to that part of the objection which represents the appearance of Christ after his resurrection as not having been sufficiently public. The other part of the objection refers to the selection of the witnesses.

As the fact of the resurrection was important, it was necessary, you perceive, to have not only a sufficient number of witnesses, but also such as were suitable. Now if some persons were suitable to become witnesses and others were not, it was evidently necessary that there should be a selection. When I

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say that some persons might be suitable and others unsuitable for this purpose, I wish by all means to be understood. The fact to be proved is, that the same Jesus who died on the cross rose again from the dead. All persons, it is evident, were not competent to give evidence on this subject. As persons who never saw Jesus after his resurrection could not testify that he was raised, so neither could those who had never seen him before his death. In order to be an original witness on this subject, it was necessary to have been familiarly acquainted with Jesus before his death, and to have seen him distinctly, and to have had opportunities of examining his person, after he had risen. It was necessary that the witnesses should have been known to be thus competent by others, whose conviction was to be grounded on their testimony. Without that knowledge of Christ's person which has now been mentioned, ten thousand witnesses would avail nothing. Their testimony would not be a sufficient ground on which to support our faith. It might even have had an opposite effect. When numerous witnesses are brought forward, deposing to a fact with which they are found to have little or no acquaintance, we readily suspect that there is a want of better testimony.

It will now, perhaps, be granted that a selection of witnesses was not only a circumstance which should excite no suspicion of fraud, but was necessary in order that the truth concerning the resurrection might fairly appear, and that our faith in that most important event, might rest on a solid foundation.

The only remaining question must therefore be, why different persons had not been selected; why the chosen witnesses were Christ's disciples, rather than unbelievers; for instance, the high priest and Jewish sanhedrim, before whom Jesus had been examined, and to whom, therefore, his person must have been known.

In reply to this I observe, that as our Lord had before his death, made an appointment with his disciples, to meet them in Galilee, having used these words: After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee; and as they were, after the

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resurrection, reminded of these words by the angel, it would be natural to suppose that others besides believers, impelled by curiosity, accompanied them on this occasion. Certainly, unless the disciples kept the appointment as a profound secret, there was a fair opportunity for any person to resort thither. Many suppose that the five hundred brethren who saw Christ at once, saw him on this occasion; i. e. on a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had declared that he would make himself known. On this supposition, it is still more probable that others besides believers were made acquainted with the appointment. It can hardly be imagined that an assignation of Christ, which had become so public as to collect five hundred of his followers, should not have been known to any persons of a different description.

As to the other part of the objection, viz. that it would have been more satisfactory, had Jesus appeared to the high priest and the Jewish sanhedrim, by whom he had been examined and condemned, I reply, that the thing here asserted is by no means certain. That neither the Jewish rulers who crucified Jesus, nor the people who enjoyed a malicious pleasure in witnessing the scene, deserved further means of conviction, after having disregarded all the preceding evidence will, I presume, be readily granted. But though they did not deserve such a favor, you may imagine that had it been granted them, the evidence of the resurrection would have been more satisfactory to others.

Your confidence in this opinion will, I am persuaded, be greatly diminished by further reflection. Do you know that the high priest and rulers would have believed that Jesus was Messiah, even had he appeared to them after his resurrection? The resurrection was, indeed, good evidence to support his claims. So were the miracles which he had wrought during his life. These had precisely the degree of conspicuity for which the objector pleads, but they were not effectual in subduing Jewish infidelity. The fact of his having wrought miracles was, on several occasions, so evident, that it could not be, and was not denied. The raising of Lazarus was of this description. But the consequence of this miracle was not faith in Jesus as the anoint-

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ed of God, and a relinquishment of prejudices, but an effort to prevent others from believing him: Then gathered the chief priests and pharisees a council, and said, what do we? for this man doeth many miracles. When Peter had restored to soundness the lame man who asked alms at the gate of the temple, the rulers, elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and many more gathered together at Jerusalem, for the purpose of investigating the affair and of taking measures accordingly: When they had commanded the apostles to go aside out of the council, they conferred in private, saying, What shall we do with these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all them that dwell at Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. What was the result? Precisely as on the former occasion; not conviction, but an attempt to suppress the new religion: That it spread no more among the people, let us straitly threaten them that they speak no more in this name. Now the cure of the lame man at the temple, and the resurrection of Lazarus, was as good proof that Jesus was Messiah, as his own resurrection. The former miracles were believed, but did not subdue their prejudices against Jesus. How then is it certain that the latter, had it been believed, would have been effectual? The former miracles of Jesus had the very degree of publicity which is here pleaded for. They were wrought openly; some of them on public occasions, and before thousands of people. By his death he finished his ministry, both as instructor and high priest. After his death the scene was greatly changed. From that time there was nothing of his former familiarity with earth; and the reason why he appeared at all, was that competent witnesses might have full assurance that he had risen. This was effected by the number of those to whom he appeared, and by the various circumstances attending those appearances, such as eating, drinking, and conversing with them, and by submitting his person to the examination not only of their sight and hearing, but likewise of their touch.

It hence follows, that our faith in the resurrection of Christ rests on a firm foundation. Connected with this is another in-

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quiry of inexpressible moment, viz. whether we have experimentally known what is the exceeding greatness of God's power towards them who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.

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LECTURE XXI.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY ARISING FROM THE CHARACTER OF JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES.

It has been shown, I conceive, not only that Jesus of Nazareth claimed to work miracles, but actually wrought them, and that he himself rose from the dead.

To strengthen the argument exhibited in the preceding lectures, I shall spend a few moments in considering what must have been the moral character both of Jesus and his disciples, if his claims were not well founded. I am induced to this from the consideration that some persons, who reject all the accounts of miracles contained in the gospel, are liberal enough in their commendations of those by whom these accounts were given. They speak of Christ and his apostles, as amiable and virtuous men. Now this commendation is wholly unmerited, if their pretensions and their testimony were known by themselves to be false. Is it consistent with the character of an amiable and virtuous man, most solemnly and repeatedly to violate truth? Was it consistent with uprightness, for Jesus to say that he was the Son of God; that he came from the bosom of the Father; that he was sent as a light into the world; that he was one with the Father; that he had power to quicken whom he would; that the Father had committed all judgment to him; and that he the Son of man, should appear in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory?—Is it consistent with uprightness, I ask, for a man, who has received no divine commission, to say this of himself? Now, if Christ wrought no miracles, notwithstanding his high and solemn

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claims, his disciples, we have seen, must have known his real character; i. e. they must have known him to be an impostor, and as often as they appealed to his miracles, they must have known that they uttered falsehood; and the falsehood must have been enormous, when they asserted his resurrection. This is agreeable to the concession of Paul: If Christ be not risen, then are we found false witnesses of God. As it was the great object of their efforts and preaching, to induce men to believe that Jesus was the Messiah; that he rose from the dead, and would judge the world; it is undeniable, on the supposition now made, that their great object was to propagate a lie, and thus to deceive the world on a subject of the highest importance. It was a part of their doctrine, that all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. If, while they preached thus, they were conscious of devoting themselves entirely to the propagation of a falsehood, they must have been persons of extreme profligacy, and could not even have believed that there was any moral Governor of the universe. For well they knew, that if there were a moral Governor, he would pour down his indignation on the authors of a falsehood so deliberate and daring. The apostles of Jesus on this supposition, well deserved the treatment which they received, and were justly accounted the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.

But if such were their characters, the enterprise in which they engaged must have imposed on them perpetual constraint. They must have assumed the appearance of probity, zeal, and sensuality. The nature of that religion which they taught, and the effects produced by their ministry afford strong evidence of the correctness of their deportment. There is such obvious incongruity between the high moral requirements of Christianity and a profligate life; between the awful sanctions of this religion, and disregard to those moral precepts which are thus sanctioned, that had the lives of the apostles been immoral, or even indifferent, those great effects, which it is allowed did result from their preaching, would have been perfectly unnatural. Pliny

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gives honorable testimony to the character of the early Christians; and Mr. Gibbon himself assigns the purity of their lives as one reason why their doctrines were so readily and extensively imbibed. Every sensible unbeliever, I think, would be ready to concede that the apostles must have assumed the appearance of men correct in their habits, detached from the world, and tremblingly alive to moral obligation. Of course, they must, if Christianity was not true, have acted in perpetual disguise. It would have required incredible effort in twelve unprincipled and profligate men to maintain at all places, and in all companies, both when they were together, and when widely dispersed, that appearance of probity and disinterested zeal, which their assumed character rendered necessary. It was strange that they should not have been fatigued and disgusted with constant restraint; with such perpetual violence done to their inclinations.

It should likewise be noticed, that these persons, if their testimony concerning Christ was not true, must have been most sincerely hostile to that moral system, which they inculcated. They must have hated that purity which they required, and unless they were atheists, must have trembled at the effects produced by their own preaching. If it ever came into their minds, as possible, that their own doctrine of a retribution should prove true, the thought must have been extremely unwelcome, as none would be likely to share more largely than themselves in the horrors of future punishment.

Let us now consider, whether the accounts of Christ, given us by the evangelists, have the appearance of being the production of fraudulent men. They do not omit, or conceal those circumstances which might appear disadvantageous either to themselves or their Master. They acknowledge their low descent. Some of them were fishermen. Matthew was a publican, a profession at that time greatly disreputable. The reputed father of Jesus, was a mechanic; and both he and Mary were in the humbler walks of life, as evidently appears from the circumstances attending his birth, and the sacrifice which was of-

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fered at the purification. The writers of the New Testament do not, it has already been observed, exhibit exclusively the fair side of their own characters. Paul acknowledges that he had been a persecutor of the church: I am, says he, the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. Peter, who had, with vehemence, professed attachment to his Master, and declared that he would be the last to desert him, denied with execrations, that he knew the man. The evangelists inform us that Christ had occasion severely to reprehend the incredulity of his disciples. At one time he says: O fools, and slow of heart to believe all which the prophets have written. Paul gives an account of Peter's criminal compliance with Jewish institutions: He withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed.

There is another particular in the manner of the evangelists, not unworthy of our regard. When a man is making a statement which he knows to be false, he usually by his positive manner, and by reiterating his declarations, betrays anxiety as to the reception of what he asserts. From all appearance of this kind the evangelists are remarkably free. The authors make a very plain statement of facts, as men conscious of no fraud; and then leave the reader to form his conclusions and determine his actions as duty, reason, and interest demand. It will be allowed, I think, that this manner of narration is what we should not expect from fraudulent men; and that we should as little expect from persons of this character, that candor, with which the evangelists record their own imperfections and faults.

Again; men never engage in any pursuit, much less in one which requires great sacrifices and effort, without some prospect of success. But if Christianity was a fraud, the chances against its prosperity were ten thousand to one. This immense improbability must have been known to its advocates. The moral requirements of this religion are, we have seen, adverse to the native propensities of man, while those systems of religion which Christianity was designed to supplant, rather cherished, than counteracted these propensities. Power, influence, wealth, in-

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terest, learning, and prejudices, were found in the ranks of its enemies. To propagate a new system of error in opposition to all these, what advantages did the apostles possess? Were they in high stations, so that their example would impress others, and awe them into imitation? They were, we have seen, fishermen and mechanics. Were they able, by the possession of wealth, to bribe others to favor their designs? They could not, without habitual labor, obtain competency for their own support. Were they by their extensive information capable of imposing on the mass of their countrymen? Their occupations show them to have been illiterate. As to any divine assistance, the supposition precludes the possibility of their expecting it. On what ground, then, could they have hoped for success? Were not the chances against it, at least, a thousand to one?

Let us now, for a moment, contemplate the condition of the Christian apostles, supposing them to have testified falsely. They were men of the most thorough and settled depravity. They set themselves to propagate a moral system, which must have been an object of their own detestation; a set of doctrines which they would not, for a thousand worlds, have found to be true. They must perpetually have imposed on themselves the most rigid restraints, preserving in the midst of all their fraud, the garb of uncommon sanctity; and manifesting, whether they spake or wrote, such consistency, and such apparent uprightness and candor, that the most perspicacious of their adversaries, could not detect the fraud. In this most embarrassing situation they placed themselves, when the ill success of their attempt was almost certain.

Perhaps the deist will grant all this; perhaps he will allow that the apostles were the most profligate of men; that they really abhorred the moral system which they taught; that they acted perpetually in disguise; and that their chance of success was extremely small; but still they were so bent upon their object, as to persevere at all events.

I admit that there are cases, in which persons will make some sacrifices in pursuit of an object, at which they do not think it

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probable they shall ever arrive. Men consent to place a small sum of money in a lottery, though it is allowed to be improbable that any part will return to them. But here is a very great disproportion between what they sacrifice, and what they hope to receive. They sacrifice a very small sum to the chance of receiving a large one. Now, I ask, what was the reward, by the hope of which the apostles, if dishonest men, could have been influenced? What immense gain was that for the sake of which they were willing to place themselves in a situation so embarrassing, with scarcely a possibility of success?

Surely no one will say that they hoped for rewards after death. If there should be a retribution they were preparing for punishment. Their hopes must then have been from the present life. Did they expect wealth? But who could enrich them? Was their Master rich? The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. Did they preach rebellion, thereby designing to produce revolutions in the State? They cautiously avoided all interference of this nature; seldom mentioning politics, and never but with design to inculcate submission to the powers, then existing. In the fate of their Master, they had seen what was likely to be their own. Besides, he had distinctly forewarned them: Behold I send you forth, as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; but beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils, and will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my name's sake. We find that all these forbidding circumstances, which Christ predicted, were speedily realized by the apostles: I think, saith Paul, that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place, and labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, persecuted, and defamed; we are

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made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

But perhaps you cannot easily believe that the sufferings of the primitive believers were such as Paul represents; and suppose that his authority is not much to be relied on, when the Christian religion is the matter in question. I reply, that Paul's authority is not here quoted to show directly that Christianity is true; but only to establish a matter of fact, viz. that the primitive disciples endured severe sufferings; which is a very different matter from the truth of Christianity. But the parties concerned are not the only witnesses. The sufferings of Christ himself we have seen are proved by heathen testimony. So are the persecutions encountered by his disciples. The manner in which they were treated in Bithynia, was noticed in a previous lecture, in which it was likewise observed, that these persecutions occurred under a mild magistrate. It might have been added, that this magistrate was so far from being impelled to these measures by the emperor who appointed him, that the emperor was on this subject the milder of the two. Now if the disciples of Christ suffered so much from rulers who were not by nature inclined to cruelty, what evils must they not have suffered under the brutal and ferocious Nero? On this subject too we are not left to conjecture. The biographer of Nero speaks of the Christians as suffering punishment. Tacitus informs us what their punishment was. "Their sufferings," says he, "were aggravated by insult and mockery, for some were disguised in the skins of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs; some were crucified; others were wrapped in pitched shirts and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights to illuminate the night."

It would be easy to adduce more testimony, if more were necessary. The sufferings of early Christians is what no intelligent unbeliever will call in question.

Now if the apostles were not upright men, by what motives could they have been actuated? Why did they submit to such

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complicated distress. Who can believe that twelve men, with no prospect of advantage, should undertake to impose on the world a religious fraud? That they should persevere in this attempt while actually experiencing want, contempt, stripes, imprisonment, and the gibbet? That they should uniformly maintain great purity and sanctity of life, so as to extort praise even from their enemies; and should at last yield their breath, though amidst flames and torture, with firmness and triumph, with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

In the course of these lectures it has been shown, I conceive, that Christianity was not obscure in its origin; that the time and place of its birth are perfectly known; that having been preached in the city, where the miracles on which it claims to be founded, are said to have been wrought, its numerous enemies had a fair opportunity of bringing these miracles to a test; that the disciples could not have been deceived as to these miracles; and lastly, that they could neither have deceived others, nor had any inducements to attempt it.

It hence follows, first, that Jesus Christ wrought miracles, and was therefore a teacher sent from God. Secondly, that he was the Messiah whom the prophets described, and of whose advent there prevailed at the time, a general expectation. This was unquestionably the character which he claimed; and it would have been as inconsistent with the perfections of God to give the power of working miracles to a prophet who claimed to be Messiah, and was not, as to have given the same power to one who falsely pretended to be a prophet.

In the remaining part of this lecture, I shall attempt briefly to state the internal evidence of the Christian religion. We may be entirely confident, that a communicatinn from God would not be unworthy of its origin; that it would contain nothing inconsistent either with truth or reason. Should it be found that a bad system of morals were inculcated in this religion, or that unworthy representations of the divine character were given, there would be reason to suspect some latent fallacy, in the deductions which have been made in favor of its divine origin.

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The character of the Supreme Being must constitute a most important article in every religious system. It is the foundation on which rests the whole building. How well, in this particular, does revealed religion support its high pretensions? Is it honorable or not, for the Supreme Being to appear as they have represented him? Do the writers of Scripture give any absurd account of the origin of Deity, as the heathen mythologists do of the birth and family of Jove? Our sacred writings represent God as without beginning of days, or end of life: From everlasting to everlasting thou art He. Do they speak of him dishonorably as it respects his power? Just the reverse: By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth. He spake, and it was done. He said, let there be light, and there was light. Is the God of the Scriptures confined to any one place? He is not far from every one of us: Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? Is he subject to disappointment on account of partial, or confined views: Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world: Whatsoever the Lord doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be added to it, nor any thing taken from it: The counsel of the Lord shall stand; and he will do all his pleasure. Is he a partial Deity? Verily God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he who feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him. Do the Scriptures portray the Creator as deserting his works—neglecting to govern the creatures he has formed? Behold as the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are ye in my hands. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. Speaking of the conquests of the king of Assyria, and the subversion of the nations which he invaded, he saith: Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, how I have formed it? Now have I brought to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities, into ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power; they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the house tops, and as corn blasted before it is grown up. But

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while the Creator's wisdom and influence are said thus to be concerned in the government of nations, it would be a great defect in the Scriptures, did they represent him as disregarding minute objects and events. Far from this, the Author of Christianity asserts, that no hair falls from the human head, nor a sparrow to the ground without divine agency. As to the goodness and moral purity of God, they are clearly and abundantly taught throughout the whole volume. Let the most enlightened philosopher attempt to paint the character of God, he can, without redundancy and confusion, make no addition to the picture which the writers of Scripture have drawn; he can erase nothing without producing defect.

If there is consistency in the Christian religion, its moral system must correspond with the character which it gives of the Supreme Being. It would be absurd to represent God as not pleased with moral qualities resembling his own. In this particular Christianity does not deny itself. It does not require human virtues inconsistent with the divine attributes. All duties are comprehended in this summary: Be ye followers of God.

The Scriptures require us to make our Creator the object of supreme love, confidence, reverence, and admiration; and to maintain towards our fellow men unvarying probity and good will. They do not tell us that virtue consists in voice, or bodily motion; but in the affections of the heart, giving rise to correspondent words and actions. They speak of no man as virtuous, who does not design virtuously; they call no man vicious, whose designs are not inconsistent with virtue. They tell us, indeed, that moral obligation extends to every moment of rational existence; and that any intention or wish to deviate from a straight path, any feeling not subordinate to virtue, is therefore criminal. This I know may appear somewhat alarming; it may appear rigid. But I challenge any metaphysician or philosopher to form a consistent scheme of ethics, in which this seeming rigidity is not inculcated or implied. I have seen this attempted by men of superior talents; but in such an attempt

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their talents always fail them. The reason is obvious. No ingenuity or acuteness can prove a coincidence between obliquity and rectitude, between a crooked line and a straight one.

I know not whether the few remaining remarks will be considered as making any addition to the aggregate of evidence already before us. To my own apprehension the accession will not be inconsiderable. Christianity speaks of mankind as we find them. Had it described the human race as generally virtuous, pleased with the character and demands of their Creator, earnest in duty, and comparatively indifferent to private interest; had it described them as generally acting from high and honorable motives, by which I mean, such motives as, if exposed, would do them honor in the estimation of the most able judges in the universe; had it represented that the affections of the human heart were habitually coincident with the dictates of the understanding, great evidence indeed would have been necessary to prove its divinity and truth; for such an account would ill correspond with experience and observation. But the testimony which the Scriptures actually give of the human character, is amply confirmed by all which we feel, see, and hear.

The writers of Scripture inform us that in respect to moral character, some are, by a divine operation, essentially changed; hating what they once loved, and loving what they once despised. It tells us of an active, well-informed enemy and persecutor of the Christian church, suddenly converted to that religion, against which he had previously "breathed out threatenings and slaughter." It speaks of thousands of others, whose character and course of life were essentially altered in a manner less surprising. Now, in all parts of the Christian world, where the purity of the gospel has been in a considerable measure preserved, —in our own country, at every period of it, many events have occurred, between which and those above mentioned, there has been a general, but striking agreement. When we behold persons who were once either heedless of religion, or openly debauched and profane, deeply convinced of their crimes and their danger, afterwards sober, mild, pure, benevolent, and spiritual;

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the change is at first appearance, altogether unaccountable and perplexing. But if Christianity is true, all this is precisely as it should be; it is what we have reason to expect.

Persons no way tinctured with enthusiasm or superstition, of powerful intellect, and extensive information, have been brought to entertain, contrary to all their former opinions, just such views of their own corruption, as are given in Scripture, and have found no language so well adapted to express the state of their hearts, as that with which these writings abound.

That these circumstances afford no inconsiderable evidence in favor of the gospel, I am the more convinced when I consider that infidelity and scepticism least prevail, at those times and in those places, where these appearances are most distinct and numerous.

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LECTURE XXII.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.—PROPHECY.

Even if the consequences of receiving or rejecting the Christian religion, did not extend to a future life, no rational, and certainly no studious person, could be indifferent to its claims. The writings which contain this religion, or prepared the way for it, are of such high and acknowledged antiquity; they relate to subjects on which we can obtain so little information from other sources; they record facts of a nature so extraordinary; and the religion itself has produced such extensive and permanent effects on human society, that curiosity can scarcely be indulged on a subject, more interesting than those evidences which determine whether this religion were from heaven, or of men. But when we consider the full extent of the pretensions which these writings make; that they speak in such a style as this: He that believeth, hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Inattention or contemptuous indifference is inconsistent not only with most obvious duty, but with all principles of prudence and self-love.

You clearly perceive that whatever Christianity is, it is the same to all. If it was designed for the inhabitants of Judea, it is designed for yourselves and for me. I request you, therefore, to search with impartial assiduity, into the evidence on which it rests; and from reading and reflection to form this result, either "Christianity is a divine religion, and I must partake in its unchangeable decisions," or else, "It is not a divine reli-

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gion, and I am willing deliberately to set its threatenings at defiance." These observations are not made so much from any suspicion that infidelity is prevalent in this institution, as from a fear that the importance of Christianity is not duly estimated.

In addition to the evidences of revealed religion, already exhibited, I shall now very briefly consider that which arises from prophecy. This lecture will consist of preliminary remarks.

1. It is evident that the New Testament claims to be supported by prophecy. Characters and events existed when Christ was on earth, which both he and his apostles considered as having been foretold in former ages. Christ, in conversation with two disciples on their way to Emmaus, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. It is hence evident that he applied to himself certain passages in the Old Testament which were thought to be prophetical descriptions of Messiah. His apostles proceeded on the same ground. When Peter addressed the Jews, astonished at the miraculous cure performed on the impotent man, he spake of the Christian age as being foretold, or alluded to by all the prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. The Christian church is represented as being built on the foundation of the prophets.

It is evident to any one but moderately acquainted with the Scriptures, that a prophetic spirit had, in the opinion of the writers of the New Testament, been communicated to individuals from the beginning of the world; and that their predictions had relation, either directly or indirectly, to the Christian religion. It would be easy to mention the promise made to our first parents, concerning the ascendancy which the seed of the woman should gain over the serpent; the promise made to Abraham of the extensive blessings which were to be diffused over the world through his seed; the prophecy of Jacob con-

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cerning Shiloh, and the gathering of the people unto him; the predictions of Balaam, Moses, Isaiah, and his successors.

By this series of prophets were foretold, it is believed, not only the person, character, and sufferings of Christ, but the events which should accompany the establishment of his Gospel. The astonishing effects produced by the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost, were by him considered as the completion of an ancient prophecy of Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.

Nor is it less evident that those predictions which described the fortunes of the Jewish people, and revolutions among other nations, had reference to Christianity. For as the same persons who foretold those national events, likewise described the ministry and sufferings of Christ, it is clear that honor would be done to him and his religion, by the accomplishment of those predictions which were national, as well as those which were personal. Besides, the nations whose affairs were the subject of prophecy, had an important connexion with the Jewish and Christian church. The condition of that community, whether Jewish or Christian, which has been the depositary of divine communications, has been greatly influenced by the fate of the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires.

2. It is reasonable to expect that prophecy should attend a divine revelation. It is not easy to conceive more than two ways in which any person, having received supernatural light, should be able to prove the fact to others. These two ways are miracles and prophecy. Had the most abundant communications been made to the mind of St. Paul, they might to him have been highly edifying and important; but as soon as he began to preach any new doctrine on the ground of those communications, it would be rational and just to require him to show, by something external, that he had received them. Professing to have received new instructions from God, he might with reason, be required to perform works exceeding human power, or else to foretel events evidently beyond human foresight.

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To do either of these, would be good proof of the truth of his new doctrine; and, for aught I perceive, the only proof which could be given. When we speak of prophecy, it will be understood that it is not simply the prediction, but the accomplishment of it, which proves the inspiration, or the prophetic spirit of the person predicting. The miracles which Paul wrought, were present evidence of his divine commission. If he had wrought no miracles, but only told to his hearers that such events should take place at the close of three centuries, his doctrines could not at that time, have been received as of divine authority. But, if those doctrines had then been committed to writing, and preserved till the close of the three centuries, and the events foretold were found to happen at the time predicted, the doctrines in question would then have good claim to universal belief. There would be divine testimony in their favor. This is evidently the use which Deity requires his creatures to make of prophecy. He saith in Isaiah: Behold the former things are come to pass. On this ground he requires that confidence should be entertained in all communications from the same source. Our Saviour says: I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am he.

It is further to be understood, not only that the prophecy should precede the event, but that the event should not be within human foresight. In the prophecy of Isaiah, stress is laid on both these circumstances: New things do I declare. Before they spring forth, I tell you of them. I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, which thou didst not know.

3. It is worth our while to consider the object which Scripture prophecies profess to have in view. If that object were trivial, there would from that circumstance, be some presumption against them. On the other hand, if the object be found extremely important, though it will not hence follow that the prophecy is divine, all presumption of the kind suggested will be removed; and it must be acknowledged, that the matter is just as it would be, if the prophecies were divine.

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Now the great object of prophecy we have shown to be the Christian dispensation. So that if that dispensation is important to the interests of man, then had the prophets an objection view not unworthy of divine inspiration.

Let us see then, what is the professed object of Christianity, or of that general religious dispensation, revealed in the Scriptures. In a few words it may be answered that this object is the reformation of mankind through all ages, till the final consummation. Let it be supposed for a moment, that this reformation relates only to the morals of men; and that its consequences are confined to the present life. Had not prophecy, even on this supposition, an object of real worth and magnitude? Was it not well becoming the goodness and wisdom of God to deviate somewhat from the usual course of his providence, for the sake of diminishing that immense sum of human misery, which in all nations and at all periods, has been the consequence of vice? If to improve the morals of a family is something; if to improve those of a small civil community is more; if the reformation of an empire is one of the most noble objects ever presented to the human mind; what shall we say of the reformation of the world; not in one age, not in one century alone, but through all the thousand years of its existence!

But Christianity does not consult the happiness of man during the existence of this world only. It professes to have an object in view, to which this, vast as it is, bears no comparison. According to its representations, man, as an intellectual, accountable being, will never die; after the dissolution of the body, his capacities for pleasure or pain will be increased; the world is at present, in a state of suffering and of guilt; the condition of man in a future state depends on his real character in the present; all persons, who, by the operations of grace, are formed to true virtue in this world, will hereafter be joined to the community of obedient and happy intelligences, and those, who are destitute of real virtue, will, without end or intermission, experience a punishment adequate to their crimes. It states further, that as all have broken the divine law, and as

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those who are virtuous are but partially so, the eternal security of the latter is the result of mercy; which mercy is exercised through the intervention and sufferings of a glorious being, the Son of God, who, by the Father's appointment is the Governor and Judge of the world.

These are the general outlines of that religion, for the aid and establishment of which, prophecy was introduced. It will not be denied, I think, that this object was of sufficient magnitude to justify both prophecy and miracles. It will not be said that the end did not justify the means; or that there is any want of proportion in the general scheme of revealed religion.

4. If there are many prophecies professedly relating to some one great event; and if these prophecies were delivered in different and far distant ages, the result of evidence arising from them is somewhat greater than it would be, did they relate to events having no connexion. It is to be considered all along, that the prophecies in contemplation are supposed be fulfilled. Let it be imagined that there are ten prophecies, so well corresponding with some one great event or person, as to raise, when considered one by one, a reasonable apprehension, that such great event was intended by them. On examination of one of these, it would appear probable that such an event had a particular weight, so to speak, in the divine estimation; that Deity had thought it of sufficient importance to be made the subject of prophecy. Then, when the second prophecy came under examination, it would have not only its own weight, but whatever addition of strength resulted from this circumstance. But the force of this circumstance would be doubled, when two had been considered, and so of the rest. It is evident then, that when the last of the ten prophecies came under consideration, its own intrinsic weight would be connected with a very strong presumption, or perhaps certainty, that the event to which it apparently alluded, had been the subject of divine predictions.

This principle is doubtless acknowledged in common life. If we hear reports of a certain fact from twenty independent sources, the aggregate of conviction is greater than the numeri-

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cal sum of all the evidence. That is, the reports have their own appropriate weight, and in addition to this they have strength derived from each other.

In the Scripture prophecies, there is to all appearance, great unity of design. There is a grand object kept perpetually in view. Many point directly to the character of Messiah, many to the condition of his church, and others to the circumstances and revolutions of neighboring communities, by which the interests of the church were affected. The series of prophecy, contained in the Scriptures, extends for about four thousand years. The Christian dispensation was foretold according to the opinion of those who believe in revelation, to the first parents of the human family; it was foretold by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; by Balaam and Moses; by Isaiah, and a succession of inspired men, who were raised up among the Jewish people. Further particulars as to the state of Christianity in the world, were predicted by Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Now all these predictions have their own separate weight; they have likewise a weight which they derive from each other. It would seem highly incredible, that false prophets should rise up in succession for four thousand years, delivering predictions, which were strikingly fulfilled either in the same person, viz. Christ, or else in those events which evidently related to the cause in which he was engaged. It will not be pretended, I think, that any thing similar to this was ever known to take place in the world.

5. Of prophecy it is sometimes said, that if it were in fact from God, there would be in all cases such a striking coincidence between the prediction and the event, as that every person must at first sight clearly perceive the one to be the completion of the other, and therefore, where the coincidence is not thus obvious and striking, it certainly follows that the pretended prophecy is not divine.

I answer that the premises here assumed, are by no means to be admitted. Should God be pleased to endue a person with the power of foretelling a future event, it would be impossible

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to say with what degree of clearness the event would be foretold. The language might be plain or figurative; and if figurative, it might be very intelligible to persons habituated to that kind of language, and obscure to those who were not. Besides, that knowledge of God which we obtain from his works, is as truly a revelation from him, as that which he has communicated in his word. But surely, it will not be said, that this knowledge is so perfect as it might be, or so perfect as we could desire. Though God has revealed himself to all men in some degree, yet by giving different capacities to different men, he has rendered them capable of acquiring different degrees of knowledge as to himself. It is far indeed from being the usual mode of divine proceeding, to afford perfect light and satisfaction, on every subject on which men are concerned, so far that almost all the business of life, however important, is carried on under great degrees of real uncertainty.

The doctrine of the soul's immortality equally concerns the whole human race; if of any doctrine we might, beforehand, conclude confidently that it would be clearly revealed, we might conclude thus concerning the soul's immortality. Yet God has been pleased to reveal this doctrine with perfect clearness, to those only who enjoy supernatural light. Now surely, it is not at all less credible that God should inspire persons to foretel future events, and yet the coincidence between the events and prediction not be so striking as might possibly be conceived; than that he should give to men probable evidence of a future existence, but not that which amounts to certainty. As in general we are by no means competent to decide, on supposition a revelation were made, how much it would contain, nor the degree of perspicuity which would belong to it; so, as to prophecy in particular, we could not beforehand, determine what degree of clearness there would be in the coincidence between the event and the prediction. It is evident, then, that we are not to reject a prediction, as not divine, because the coincidence between it, and the event to which it seems to relate, is not so striking, as we might have expected. In what way, then, are

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we to proceed? Plainly in this. Consider whether it be more probable that the professed prophecy were divinely given, or that the coincidence, which there actually is, should exist by chance.

The propriety of this rule, it is believed, infidels themselves would allow, however they might vary from believers in their application of it. Now it cannot be denied, that many passages in Scripture, professedly prophetic, have the appearance of referring to one grand object; I mean the interests of Christianity. Between many of these, considered individually, and the event, there is a coincidence, for which it is much more rational to account by supposing it the result of divine inspiration, than of chance. But when we consider the number of those seemingly prophetic passages, and that they all seem to refer to one great, but general object, the unreasonableness of attributing the whole to chance becomes obvious. Take, for instance, all those passages in Isaiah which peculiarly correspond with certain traits in the person, sufferings, manners, or death of Jesus Christ. Now as these passages were certainly in existence hundreds of years before Christ came, if they were not given by inspiration, it was improbable that future events should correspond with any one of them; peculiarly improbable that future events should correspond with all; but that they should all be fulfilled in one person is wholly incredible. It would be more incredible than that twenty dice, thrown up carelessly, at different times by the hand of a boy, should all come down not only on the same side, but in the some place, so as to be piled one upon another.

Of prophecy it may be said, as of religion in general, it asks nothing as a favor. It claims a ration and fair trial. It claims to be received, if its coincidence with subsequent events cannot be rationally accounted for, without the supposition of divine influence. If it can, prophecy consents to relinquish all its claims.

6. We perceive that in one point of view, prophecy has an advantage over miracles. These afford evidence irresistibly strong, to those who witness them. To others, who receive ac-

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counts of them through good human testimony, they afford evidence which is sufficient to support a firm and rational belief; but the evidence thence arising is, doubtless, not entirely so strong to those who hear of them, as to those who were present. But from prophecy new evidence may arise in every age. Events may occur at present, which were clearly the object of those predictions, which were delivered eighteen centuries or two thousand years ago. It would seem remarkably consonant with divine wisdom to communicate to a religious system, derived from heaven, the power, so to speak, of supporting itself, i. e. of exhibiting from time to time, new evidence of its divine origin; so that one source of evidence might be replenished, if the other were in any measure impaired by time. We do not at the present day behold miracles; but it may hereafter be shown, that we do witness some events which were predicted many centuries ago, by those through the medium of whom our religion is derived.

The last particular to be noticed in this lecture is, that we are by no means to discard all prophecy because some predictions have been misapplied, or interpreted in a fanciful or absurd manner. If a passage in any book, whether sacred or profane, has been whimsically interpreted by some commentators, does it follow that the writer of that passage had no meaning? Because Horne Tooke has shown that some of Shakspeare's commentators have erroneously explained certain phrases, used by that author, does it follow that these phrases were insignificant? Much less will this follow concerning other parts of his work, which are written with more perspicuity. Because some parts of the human body have been supposed to be designed for a purpose, which it is afterwards found not to answer, does it hence follow that the Creator had no design in that part, or that the whole is destitute of design?

Likewise, should it be found, as it doubtless will, that many prophetic passages are at present unintelligible, it does by no means follow that they will always continue so. Events may occur as evidently corresponding with them, as past events have

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with other prophecies. It is very possibly the design of God, that new evidence in favor of Christianity should, from the fulfilment of prophecy, be occasionally presenting itself even unto the end of the world.

In the next lecture, by divine permission, I shall notice particular prophecies.

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LECTURE XXIII.

PROOFS OF CHRISTIANITY, ARISING FROM PROPHECY.

It is very far from being my intention, either to take a general view of the prophecies recorded in Scripture, or to attempt a minute examination of any. A small number of those which are most remarkable will be noticed, and those particulars pointed out, in which their accomplishment has been particularly observable.

Our first attention will be directed to the prediction of Moses concerning the calamities by which the disobedience of his nation should be punished.

You will remember, that the religion of Moses does not speak distinctly of a future state. To that people God sustained the relation of king, or political head. Disobedience to his laws in general, but especially idolatry, he considered as sedition against himself; rebellion against the government which he had instituted.

The rewards by which they were encouraged to obey related to this world; so did the calamities by which their defection was to be punished. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy are portrayed in glowing colours, the prosperity which obedience should procure; and the unparalleled miseries, which in case of general apostacy should overwhelm the nation. That this threatening or this prediction of judgments was delivered before the events occurred, to which it is supposed to refer, is placed out of all dispute by the consideration, that many of them have happened since the Christian era, and others are now existing. Of course, should the coincidence between the

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events and the prediction be found so remarkable, and appear in so many particulars, that it cannot be rationally attributed to chance, it will irresistibly follow that the prophecy was divine.

Invasion by enemies was one of those calamities, by which it is foretold that the disobedient nation should be chastised. He, i. e. thine enemy, shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and heshall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Agreeably to this, we scarcely ever read of any great apostasy or corruption in the Jewish nation, whether under their judges or kings, without finding that soon after, some of their neighboring enemies were leading an enemy into the country. The object of these incursions was either to distress the inhabitants and to obtain plunder, to reduce some fortified places, or to lay siege to the capital itself.

It is foretold that during the siege the three following circumstances should occur.

1. Extreme misery, and sufferings in general. Mention is made of the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies should distress them.

2. That men should be reduced to the necessity of feeding on their own children: And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, and the flesh of thine own sons and of thy daughters, in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. So that the man who is tender among you and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children, whom he shall leave. So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children, whom he shall eat; because he hath nothing left him in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.

3. That women should resort to the same means for the support of life: The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eyes shall be evil

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towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter, and towards her young children, whom she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly.

Let us now see whether in all these particulars, the prediction has been accomplished.

1. As to extreme misery and sufferings in general. In the sixth chapter of the second book of Kings, we read the following: And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad, king of Syria, gathered all his host and went up and besieged Samaria; and there was a great famine in Samaria; and behold they besieged it until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver. Omitting other passages of Scripture to the same purpose, we pass on to the account given by Josephus, a contemporary writer, of the deplorable state of Jerusalem, when besieged by the Romans. "An infinite number," saith he, "perished in the city through famine; for in every place where any show or sign of food was, presently arose a battle; and the dearest friends of all fought now, one with another, to take the food from others in distress: neither did they believe them that were dying through famine; but the thieves searched them whom they saw yielding up the ghost, thinking that they, dying for famine, had hid about them some food. And for very penury they ate such things as the most filthy creatures living in the world must loathe. In brief, they did eat their girdles and shoes, and the skins that covered their shields."

2. Whereas, it was foretold, that men should be reduced to the necessity of feeding on their own children; we read in the book of Baruch, as follows: "The Lord hath made good his word, which he pronounced against us and against our judges who judged Israel, against our kings and against our princes, and against the men of Israel and Judah; to bring upon us great plagues, such as never happened under the whole heaven, according to the things that were written in the law of Moses, that a man should eat the flesh of his own son and of his own daughter."

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3. It was foretold, we have seen, that women should resort to the same expedient for the support of life.

At the siege of Samaria, the following fact occurred. A woman exclaimed: Help, O king. The king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow. So we boiled my son and did eat him: And I said unto her the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him, and she hath hid her son.

From the Lamentations of Jeremiah it appears that similar distresses were experienced at the siege of Jerusalem before it was taken by the king of Babylon: The hands of the pitiful women, saith the prophet, have sodden their own children; they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

In the eighth chapter of the seventh book of the Jewish War, the author informs us, that a woman of noble family, who had fled to Jerusalem to escape the Roman arms, was compelled by rage and necessity to do an action, the most abhorrent from nature. "O miserable child, said she to her son, in war, famine, and sedition, for which of these shall I keep thee? Be thou meat for me, a terror to the seditious, and a tragical story to be spoken of by posterity. Having thus spoken, she slew her son, and did seethe the one half of him, and did eat it; the rest she covered over and preserved."

It will surely be allowed, that these facts were of no ordinary kind; and that they were not within the compass of human foresight. Yet they were minutely predicted many hundred years before their existence.

It was foretold by Moses that the Jews should be again brought into Egypt and sold unto their enemies for bond men and bond women, and no man should buy them. In the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, it appears there were in Egypt one hundred and twenty thousand captive Jews. After the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, feeble persons and those in advanced life were killed by the soldiery; all healthy and vigorous persons above seventeen years old, were sent bound into Egypt, to be employed

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in certain works, as digging and manuring the fields, and to be used in other public business. "So little care was taken of these captives," saith Bishop Newton, "that eleven thousand of them perished for want. The markets were quite overstocked with them, so that they were sold with their wives and children at the lowest price, there being many to be sold and few purchasers."

The Jews were further threatened, that they should be plucked from their own land. This was fulfilled in relation to Israel, when the tribes composing that nation were removed by the Assyrians. As it respects the kingdom of Judah, it was accomplished at the Babylonish captivity; but more emphatically, when the Romans had consumed their capital, and spread desolation over their country. But a small number of Jews, it appears, are now to be found in Judea.

In the twelfth century, Benjamin, a Jew of Tudela in Spain, travelled into all places, where he thought there were synagogues, to inform himself as to the state of his nation.

From reading his account, Basnage was led to make the following remark: "'Tis an astonishing thing, that Jerusalem, where God had put his temple and name, and which the Jews ought to consider as his habitation, is almost entirely abandoned by that nation. Our author found not above two hundred persons. They lived all together in David's tower; and made there but a very little figure. The wonder is increased, says he, when we consider, what remains of superstition they have for that sacred city; for upon a wrong notion that there was one of the walls of their Holy Place remaining, they went to make their prayers before that wall, as if the place were more holy than another."

If Jerusalem had so few Jews in it, the rest of the Holy Land was still more depopulated. Benjamin found two of them in one city and twenty in another. He says, that Shunem was one of the cities which had the greatest number, in which he reckoned three hundred. It hence appears, with how much

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exactness the divine threatening, that the Jews should be plucked from their own land, has been executed.

It was further predicted by Moses, that his nation, if disobedient, should be left small in number, whereas they were as the sand of the sea for multitude. Josephus, in one place, gives the following account of those who were taken captive and slain at the siege of Jerusalem. "The number of the captives that were taken during the whole time of the war was 97,000, and the number of all that died and were slain 1,100,000; the most of them being Jews by nation, but not inhabitants of that place. For being assembled together from all parts to the feast of unleavened bread, presently and on a sudden, they were environed by war."

The numbers just mentioned, relate only to the time in which Jerusalem was actually besieged. But the captives and the dead in different places, during the whole seven years, amounted agreeably to the computation of Basnage, to 1,339,690; (Bas. p. 58.) 580,000 Jews perished in the campaigns by Adrian, and those who were sold or transported were forbidden to set foot in Judea. (Millot, Vol. II. p. 2, 228. Vol. IV. p. 22, 29, 186.)

Let it be here noticed, that while Moses predicts the calamities which were to fall upon his countrymen, the prophecy is conditional. Judgments like these were not to descend on an innocent people. If the nation should obey that divine religion which they had received, their prosperity was to be abundant and perpetual. However minutely the threatenings of Moses may appear to have been executed in the miseries which the nation endured, yet if those miseries were suffered under circumstances different from those which Moses describes; if the nation, adhering to the worship of the true God and complying with the precepts of his religion, had been thus severely chastised, there would be, on the whole, a very important discrepancy between the prophecy and the event. The truth is, however, that great corruption preceded every chastisement; and the prophecy was fulfilled as well by the circumstances un-

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der which their calamities came, as by the calamities themselves. Idolatry and corruption in morals preceded the dispersion of the ten tribes and the removal of the Jews to Babylon. After their return thence, idolatry was not indeed their habitual crime. But of their impurity, rapacity, irreligion, and faction, Josephus, himself an eye-witness and a Jew, has presented us a glowing picture. After mentioning their contempt of things sacred, he adds, "I will not cease to speak that to which grief compels me. I verily think that had the Romans forbore to come against these seditions, either the earth would have swallowed up the city, or some deluge would have drowned it, or else the thunder and lightning which consumed Sodom would have lighted upon it, for the people in the city were far more impious than those of Sodom." (Jewish War, l. vi. ch. xvi.)

Again; it is said not only that the Lord should cause them to be smitten before their enemies, but that they should be removed unto all kingdoms of the earth. The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other.

This has been verified for many centuries; it is verified at the present moment. The Jews were dispersed in Assyria, among the Medes and Persians. They have been scattered in India, in Ethiopia, Egypt and Arabia, in the Ottoman Empire, among the Tartars, in Italy, Spain and Germany, France and England. From the council of Jews held in Paris by the late emperor of France, it appears that their numbers are, at present, great, in what were then the French dominions. A few families or individuals are met in all parts of the world.

One would suppose that a people so widely dispersed, would, like a small shower falling on the ocean, be soon lost by incorporating with the general mass. This, however, would correspond neither with the prediction nor with obvious facts. There is according to Colquhoun's Police of London, about 20,000 Jews in that city. They live in great distress and wickedness. Yet will they not live in Christian families for fear of eating meat not allowed by their law. Why, let it be asked,

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do we find this rigid adherence to supposed duty among a people notoriously corrupt? I answer, that were they to mingle with other nations, they would no longer retain their distinct existence and character. When they are in the land of their enemies, saith God, I will not abhor them, to destroy them utterly. Again: I will make a full end of all nations; but I will not make a full end of thee.

Accordingly this wonderful people, though annihilated as a nation, are not annihilated as Jews. They preserve their own customs, adhere to their own religion, and refuse to intermarry with strangers. Whether treated well or ill, they are still Jews;—a people perfectly distinct from the rest of the world. "The greatest prodigy imaginable," says Basnage, "is the preservation of the Jewish nation in the midst of all the calamities they have passed through for seventeen hundred years. Both kings and people, heathen, Christians and Mohammedans, who are opposite in so many things, have united in the design of ruining this nation, but have not been able to effect it. The bush of Moses, surrounded with flames, has always burnt without consuming. The Jews have been driven from all places of the world, which has always served to disperse them into all parts of the universe." Such is the strong language of this writer.

"The wonder lies in this," says Dr. Hurd, "that they should continue so many ages, that neither worn out by hard usage nor induced by it to renounce their offensive profession and take refuge in the mass of people among whom they live; that neither time, nor custom, nor suffering, should get the better of their bigotry or patience; but that they should still subsist, a numerous, a distinct, a wretched people, as they do to this day—all this hath something prodigious in it, which the common principles of human nature will not easily explain."

It is further threatened in verse sixty-fifth: That among the nations whither they were driven, they should find no ease; neither should the sole of their foot find rest.

This has been fulfilled in their banishment from one country to another, and the hard terms on which they have been per-

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mitted even to exist. The following account, which I take from bishop Newton, is too remarkable to be omitted. "In many places they have been banished, recalled, and banished again. We will only mention their great banishments in modern times, and from countries very well known. In the latter end of the thirteenth century, they were banished from England by Edward the First, and were not permitted to return and settle again till Cromwell's time. In the latter end of the fourteenth century, they were banished from France for the seventh time by Charles VI, and ever since they have been only tolerated; they have not enjoyed entire liberty except in one city, where they have a synagogue. In the latter end of the fifteenth century, they were banished from Spain, and there were 170,000 persons who left the kingdom. Most of them paid dearly to John II, for a refuge in Portugal; but within a few years were expelled thence also by his successor Emanuel. In later times, they were banished from Prague by the queen of Bohemia."

How strikingly does this account correspond with the threatening already mentioned: Thou shalt find no ease; neither shall the sole of thy foot find rest.

It is further said: Thy life shall hang in doubt; thou shalt fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, would God, it were evening, and in the evening, would God, it were morning, for the fear of thine heart, which thou shalt fear, and the sight of thine eyes, which thou shalt see.

Agreeably to this, Basnage informs us, that kings have often employed the severity of edicts, and the hands of the executioner to destroy this nation. The seditious multitude have caused massacres and executions, infinitely more tragical than the princes. The Jews have, from age to age, run through misery and persecution, and torrents of their own blood.* By their sufferings they have been often reduced to fatal desperation. When Emanuel, king of Portugal, took away from the

* See persecution of the Jews in Spain. Gibbon, 6. 302.

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Jews their children under fourteen years of age, many of the unfortunate fathers threw their children into deep wells, and precipitated themselves after them. (Quick's Synodicon, 127.)

This nation was doomed to suffer, not banishment and death only, but peculiar and habitual reproach: Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word. It is scarcely necessary to observe that this part of the prophecy has, for many centuries, been receiving its accomplishment. In what manner is it customary to speak of this nation? Do men speak of them as the favorite people of God; the lot of Jehovah's inheritance; a royal priesthood; a holy nation? Are they not always viewed and mentioned contemptuously? Are not their avarice, riches, and obduracy proverbial? They are considered as a people, reprobated both by God and men. They are supposed to have lost the principles of integrity, as well as the rights which are common to other men. "There is no case," says McNally in his Law of Evidence, "wherein a Jew was sworn and examined till after the restoration." As their character is uniform in all places, so is the estimation in which they are held. They are as little respected in pagan as in Christian countries. Dr. Buchanan, after his return from Hindoostan to England, made the following reflections, peculiarly to our present purpose. "By express prophecy, the Jews were sentenced to become the scorn and reproach of all people, and a proverb and a by-word among all nations. Now that their stubborn unbelief should be a reproach to them among Christian nations here in the West, is not so strange; that they should be a proverb and a by-word among those who had heard the prophecy concerning them, is not so remarkable. But to have seen them, as I have seen them, insulted and persecuted by the ignorant nations of the East; in the very words of prophecy, trodden down of the heathen, trodden down by a people who never heard the name of Christ; who never heard that the Jews had rejected Christ; and who, in fact, punish the Jews without knowing the nature of their crime; this, I say, hath appeared to me an awful fulfilment of the divine threatening."

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Only one more particular in this prophecy shall be distinctly mentioned. It is that which relates to the duration of their calamities. It is said, not merely that their plagues should be wonderful, but of long continuance. To say nothing of those miseries which must have resulted to the ten tribes, torn from their country by the Assyrians, and planted in strange cities; nor of the sufferings of Judah, when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed their city and temple, leading captive to Babylon those who were the strength and excellence of their political community; passing over the persecutions which they endured from the impious cruelty of Antiochus Epiphanes, and likewise their degraded and suffering state under the Roman provincial governors; it is sufficient to date their misery from the ruin of their city by Titus; since which time have elapsed more than seventeen centuries. Nor is there any distinct period, at which they expect deliverance. "Their present misery," says the writer of their history, "has peculiar characters. In other captivities, God pointed out a time in which he would be reconciled, and break the yoke of tyrants, and restore his people to their liberty. From Babylon they returned at the end of seventy years. But God now fixes no term to the duration of Jewish misery." "They once had prophets to cheer them under their sufferings with the hope of better days. But the race of prophets is extinct. Not one is to be seen who promises the end of a calamity, which has already lasted such a vast number of ages." (Bas. l. vi. ch. i.)

I close the lecture with a few remarks.

1. There seems to be no way of evading the evidence, hence arising in favor of divine revelation. The events to which the prophecy is supposed to relate, are, beyond all question, subsequent to the prophecy. Some of them are occurring at the present moment. Nor can any person of moderate reflection and probity, attribute to chance, a coincidence so extensive and particular. The author of this prediction, let it be remembered, lived three or four thousand years ago. The particulars as to the fortunes of his nation are minutely detailed, and are ma-

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terially different in many instances from those which have happened to any other people on earth. It cannot be said that the apparent fulfilment of this prophecy is owing to any forced, or far fetched interpretation. The most obvious meaning has been affixed to the plainest language.

2. The subject has some bearing on a popular argument often used against the perpetuity of future punishment. Can it be imagined, it is sometimes asked, that under the government of an all-wise and gracious Being, such a punishment as that which the New Testament seems to describe, will be actually endured by any of the children of the human race?

Examine attentively the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy; view the Hebrew lawgiver agitated with his subject, laboring to find language in which to express the approaching misery of his nation; read of those unnatural and barbarous expedients, by which even the tender and delicate should support life, in the siege and straightness, with which their enemies should distress them; hear the prophet declare: It shall come to pass as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, so will he rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nought; read all this and say whether, had we been Jews, we should have expected a literal fulfilment of such threatenings? Should we not have said "This high-wrought, menacing language is doubtless well meant, and may answer the purpose of keeping the nation in awe; but that an all-wise and good Being should actually send calamities, literally corresponding with it, is wholly incredible."

Such, no doubt, or much more daring, were the reasoning and conversation of many Jews. Yet the calamities came in full measure.

With capacities so feeble and limited, there are innumerable cases in which we are extremely incompetent to decide, what measures the wisdom and goodness of the supreme Being will engage him to pursue. The wisdom of God is not to be arraigned by creatures whose confident conclusions are every day found to be inconsistent with undeniable facts.

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LECTURE XXIV.

PROOFS OF CHRISTIANITY ARISING FROM PROPHECY.

It is well known, that the Jewish nation have for a long time possessed certain Scriptures which they deem sacred. That these were not the consequence of Christianity, but were extant before the existence of such a religion, will be readily conceded by any person of integrity and information. Parts of these writings are prophetic. Their authors profess to be divinely inspired, and boldly foretell future events.

Among these predictions are some descriptive of a very extraordinary character. The uncommonness of their character is a circumstance not slightly to be passed over. A pretended prophet might, with tolerable safety, foretell that after an indefinite number of years, a military chief, or eminent philosopher would make his appearance. Characters of this kind have been in considerable numbers; and future ages will probably produce them. So long, therefore, as the person predicting avoided particulars, mentioning no dates, nor individual actions, there would be a strong probability, that in a series of years greater or less, some chief, or philosopher would arise, who might be said to be the object of the prediction. But should a character of a very extraordinary kind be ushered into the world four hundred years hence; a character in whom were combined seemingly discordant qualities, a present minute description of such a character could not be given, without the inspiration of God.

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The truth of this will appear the more evidently in proportion to the minuteness of the description.

We proceed to observe, that in a great variety of passages in the Jewish prophetic writings, mention is made of an uncommon personage: Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment; and a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. Behold my servant whom I have chosen, mine elect, in whom my soul is delighted. I have put my spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, neither cause his voice to be heard in the street; a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wail for his law. Who is he that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This, that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? Similar quotations might be multiplied almost to any amount.

It can scarcely escape your notice, not only that the language here used, is remarkable, but that the qualities attributed to the person in view, are extremely different, and apparently opposite. At one time he is mentioned as a tender and cautious instructor, sedulously avoiding whatever might discourage his pupils; at another time, as a vigorous, successful warrior, with weapons, and even with raiment dyed in blood. He is neither to strive nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. Yet is he to be "a king, whom God shall establish on his holy hill of Zion; he will break his enemies with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." It would be strange indeed, that a false prophet, desirous that his predictions might obtain credit, should studiously construct them in such manner as to render it morally certain, that they would answer to no

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future event; and it would be more astonishing still, if these predictions should, notwithstanding, receive a minute completion.

You would, perhaps, endeavor to avoid part of this difficulty, by supposing, that the discordancy arises from the number of those who arrogate to themselves prophetic powers. Each one, you suppose, would think it sufficient to be consistent with himself, having no interest in the reputation of others.

This answer rests entirely on a mistake, which small attention will rectify. It is not true that seeming discordancy arises from the number of those who are engaged in the description; the same prophet describes the Messiah as possessing these different qualities. The same Isaiah who in one chapter speaks of Messiah, as a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, uses, in another part of his prophecy, the following language: His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age, the Prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.

Had Isaiah been a false prophet, and inclined to impose on men by predicting the future appearance of an eminent character it would evidently have been prudent to feign a character, the existence of which would not be incredible. By this, two advantages would have been gained, i. e. present credit, and the probability that in some future personage the prediction might receive an apparent completion.

But if there is too much inconsistency in the predictions of Isaiah, to have come from a false prophet, the conclusion may appear to you still stronger, that they could not have proceeded from a true one.

This conclusion would be perfectly just, if the apparent inconsistency were real. If those seemingly discordant qualities, of which the prophet speaks were not actually united in the person of Jesus Christ, these predictions are not to be admitted as proof of the divine mission, either of Isaiah, or the Saviour.

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But if these qualities have been united in Jesus of Nazareth, the previous improbability that they would be found combined in any individual, is undeniably a strong proof of their divine origin.

Though it is my design to mention a small part only of the prophecies which are deemed relative to Messiah, there is one too remarkably clear and copious, to be omitted. I mean that which is contained in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. This chapter, together with the last three verses of the preceding, relates wholly to one subject, viz. the Messiah. No foreign matter is admitted.

The common rendering of this prophecy does not materially differ from the celebrated translation of bishop Lowth. What variation there is, will serve rather to render its application to our Saviour the more striking.

We begin with the second verse: He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground.

The family, which gave birth to our Saviour according to the flesh had been illustrious, but was depressed at the time to which reference is here made. This appears from the circumstances in which Christ was born, from the occupation of his reputed father, and from the cheap sacrifice which was offered at the purification of the virgin Mary.

He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. To any one reading the whole chapter for the first time, it would readily occur, I think, that this language was not designed to convey an unfavorable opinion of the person to whom it relates. The impression would be that he should meet a reception no way corresponding with his real character. What kind of expectations the Jews had concerning Messiah, you well know. They were looking for talents and perhaps integrity; but these were to be united with temporal power, splendor and conquest. Proud of their standing in the church of God, they not only hated, but despised the nation to whom they were in bondage. From Messiah they expected relief, liberty and elevation.

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What form, what comeliness, what beauty could they see in the reputed son of Joseph, that he should be desired? But they were not only disappointed in perceiving in Jesus the absence of qualities which they desired; but equally disappointed in perceiving the existence of others which they did not desire. They found plainness in detecting their characters and reproving their crimes. They heard themselves compared to fruitless trees incumbering a rich and cultivated soil. They heard it announced that the kingdom of God should be taken from them and given to another nation.

It follows immediately: He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

How well did the condition of our Saviour correspond with this description? By a few obscure persons, his high character was acknowledged. But even by this class in general, he was malignantly persecuted. An inconstant, misguided populace were present sometimes, indeed, to wonder and applaud, but usually to cavil, accuse, or condemn. This numerous body in the Jewish community were always at the command of their better informed, but no less corrupt superiors. The ministers of the Mosaic religion were at this time sincerely hostile to the spirit of that religion, which it was their duty to teach. As the Mosaic establishment contributed to their ease, influence, and honor, it was an object of their warmest attachment, and by means of wrong interpretations they had been successful in hiding its spirituality both from their own view and the inspection of their disciples. On this formidable body of men, and their false system of religion the prophet of Galilee made an undisguised attack. He spared neither the vices, nor the false doctrine of the priesthood. Neither among the various religious sects, then existing, did he court the favor of any. Reproving all with impartiality, he was the object of their united resentment. Viewing him as a common enemy, they forgot their mutual discords to oppose him. By those who were elevated

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in civil life, he was regarded at some times, with jealousy, at others, with contempt. Herod endeavored to slay him while an infant, and Pontius Pilate was not regardless of those reports which represented Jesus as seeking a kingdom. In addition to all these circumstances, he was destitute: The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

That part of the prophecy which we have mentioned, though exactly fulfilled in Christ, is not in any very high sense peculiar to him. There have been other persons to whom it might without great violence, be applied. What follows is applicable to Jesus, and to him only: Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him; or, as bishop Lowth renders it: The chastisement by which our peace was effected, was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

I am not insensible of the little effect produced on the mind by evidence, however clear, if it has been often exhibited. That which is read frequently is commonly read without interest. Were a person, hitherto unacquainted with the Christian religion, after reading that account of Christ which is given by the evangelists and apostles, to read this description, knowing it to have been delivered seven hundred years before Christ appeared, and by a person professing to act under divine inspiration; it is impossible that he should not perceive a very striking agreement between that which the prophet foretold, and the accounts which the evangelists have given. Now this agreement is not lessened by time. It is as real when the accounts have been read an hundred times, as when first examined.

Language more appropriate than that used by the prophet, could not be selected to express the character and offices of Christ. His sufferings were not a punishment for his own sins. He was given, according to his own declaration, for the life of

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the world. His disciples are said to have a redemption through his blood. Whereas the prophet says: He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The apostle says: He bare our sins in his own body on the tree. The chastisement by which our peace was effected, was upon him, is another expression of the prophet, equally descriptive of the object for which Christ came. Further: All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. These are the words of Isaiah. The apostle says: All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and that none can have peace with God but those who are justified freely by his grace.

Of the person who was thus to suffer, it is said, that he should manifest great submission and mildness: He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. Is not this an exact description of our Saviour's deportment when brought to trial? Forbidding his disciples to use force for his rescue, he adds: Think ye not that I could pray the Father, and he should give me more than twelve legions of angels; but then how should the Scriptures be fulfilled; that thus it must be?

In the ninth verse, the place of our Lord's burial seems clearly predicted: He made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death. Bishop Lowth's rendering of this is much more intelligible: His grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was his tomb; i. e. his body was to have been deposited with common malefactors, but was in fact committed to a rich man's tomb. The exact fulfilment of this prophecy, saith he, will be fully shown by adding here the several circumstances of the burial of Jesus, collected from the accounts of the evangelists. "There was a rich man of Aramathea, named Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrim, and of a respectable character, who had not consented to this council and act; he went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus; and he layed it in his own new tomb, which had been hewn out of

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a rock near to the place where Jesus was crucified, having first wound it in fine linen with spices, as the manner of the Jews was to bury the rich and the great."

The prophet seems resolved not only to express the design of the Messiah's death, but to do it in language so plain, as to prevent the possibility of mistake: When thou shall make his soul an offering for sin; or, as it is understood by Lowth: If his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, he shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. By his knowledge, or rather by a knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many. In the subsequent part of the chapter, he is mentioned as bearing the sins of many, as being numbered with transgressors, and making intercession for them. On this language all comment is superseded. The office which our Saviour sustained, as mediator, is not more clearly expressed even by the apostles than it was foretold by the prophet.

We will now briefly enumerate the particulars in our Saviour's character or condition, which are foretold in one short chapter. 1. The reduced, obscure family, whence he should spring: A root out of dry ground. 2. His not answering to the expectations which the Jews had formed: He has no form or comeliness. 3. The consequent neglect and even contempt with which he should be treated. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4. His general want of prosperity, success, and even worldly accommodation: A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. 5. That he should manifest in the midst of persecution, neither anger nor impatience: He was oppressed and afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth. 6. That to complete his sufferings, he should be put to death: he was cut off from the land of the living. 7. His manner of burial: His grave was appointed with the wicked; but with the rich man was his tomb. 8. The object for the accomplishment of which his sufferings were endured: he made his soul an offering for sin; for the transgression of my people was he smitten. Lastly; the eventual success of his enterprise, and the reward

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which he should receive from the Father: Of the travail of his soul he shall see the fruit, and be satisfied. I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.

Having shown how minutely the prediction of Isaiah was accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth, I would now ask whether there ever has been any other person to whom these descriptions would apply? Do present times, or does history present to your view a single character of whom that could be said which was here asserted? Let the experiment be made, and on the issue of it the friends of revelation might safely rest the whole question, whether Christianity be supported by prophecy.

In a former part of this lecture, it was observed, that such qualities were, in prophecy, attributed to Christ, as had the appearance of incongruity. It may be necessary to make a few remarks, showing that these qualities actually existed in the character of Christ, and that the person who was thus depressed and persecuted, is notwithstanding, to be considered as a prince and conqueror.

He is often by the prophets, described as a king: A king shall reign in righteousness. I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion.

Taking this language in its most literal sense, it was, indeed, not applicable to Christ. He neither led armies, nor administered civil government. But taking it in a very elevated sense, precisely agreeable to its use in the New Testament, he subdues enemies and governs a kingdom. The church, both in its present and future condition, is denominated the kingdom of God. Those who embrace his religion are his subjects; those who are destitute of that uprightness and moral purity which this religion demands, are reckoned his enemies: As for these mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me. Again: He shall reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

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whether of things in heaven or on earth, or things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord. Christ is said to have spoiled principalities and powers, and to have triumphed over them.

It may be of importance to inquire, what impression was made by these prophecies on the minds of men before their supposed accomplishment.

1. In regard to the Jews, it is certain that the general effect on their minds was such as might have been expected from a belief that these predictions were the result of divine inspiration. At the time when our Saviour appeared, the nation were earnestly expecting an illustrious personage, whom they styled the Messiah, or the Christ: The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not. The general expectation, then existing, is further manifested by the terms in which Christ was interrogated by the disciples of John: Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? It is further manifested from the circumstance, that many false Messiahs appeared. Had not the state of the public mind been favorable, they would not have attempted such a fraud. The same expectation is cherished by the Jews of the present age. With Christians, they believe that the prophets foretold the coming of a great deliverer. They believe, too, that the time at which he was to have come has long since expired, and that this unexpected delay is to punish the sins of their nation.

2. This expectation of an illustrious character, is not peculiar to modern Jews. It prevailed, we have seen, before the coming of Christ, nor was it confined to the Jewish nation. The Gentiles had likewise a belief, that some distinguished personage was soon to appear. Whence they obtained it, is not very difficult to be conceived. The prophecies were doubtless carried to Babylon at the time of their captivity; and might thence have been extensively propagated through the East. The Jews who settled in Alexandria, carried with them their Scriptures, which were translated into the Greek language, long

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before the Christian era. This expectation of an illustrious character was definite both as to time and place. The deliverer was expected to appear, when Christ did appear, and from among the Jewish nation.

In Suetonius' Life of Vespasian are these words, which relate to a time previous to his obtaining the empire. "Percrebuerat vetus et constans opinio, esse infatis ut Judaea profuti rerum potirentur." 'There had prevailed generally in the East an ancient and fixed opinion, that those who came from Judea were destined by fate to have the dominion.'

The same idea is conveyed in nearly the same words by Tacitus. "Pluribus inerat persuasio antiquis sacerdotum libris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens, profecti que Judaea rerum potirentur."

On the ground of these two remarkable passages, Dr. Clark asserts that before the coming of our Saviour, there was a general expectation spread over all the Eastern nations, that out of Judea should arise a person, who should govern the whole world. With this well corresponds the account given by the evangelist of the wise men, who came from the East, when at our Saviour's birth, to enquire, saying, Where is he, that is born king of the Jews?

There are many passages in our Saviour's life, foretold by the prophets with the same minuteness which is observable in that prophecy, to which we have been attending. It was foretold, that he should perform many great and beneficial miracles; such as the removing of various disorders. These miracles were wrought, when the blind received their sight; when the lame walked; when the deaf heard. It was foretold that God would give him the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession; which was fufilled in the extensive propagation of Christianity under the apostolic ministry. The town in which he should be born, was predicted by Micah; the humble triumph in which he entered Jerusalem, by Zechariah. That he should be scourged and buffeted, was foretold by Isaiah, as was the piercing of his hands and feet, by

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the Psalmist. We may add further, the gall and vinegar that were offered for drink; the mockery, which he suffered as trusting in God to deliver him; the casting of lots for his garments; and his rising without seeing corruption.

Enough has now been said, it is believed, to show that Christianity is supported not only by miracles, and its own internal evidence, but by prophecy. Those who would see this subject treated at length, and with great judgment and clearness, cannot fail to be benefitted by a careful perusal of bishop Newton's celebrated Dissertations.

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LECTURE XXV.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

The object of the present lecture is to consider some of the most plausible objections against the Christian religion. Previously to our doing this it is necessary to observe that the possibility of bringing against a proposition, some objections apparently considerable, is no proof that such proposition is not true. The natural world, according to the opinion of all but atheists, is the production of a wise, powerful, and benevolent Creator. It is, however, far from being true that this world is, in all respects, such as human wisdom would have anticipated. It is far from being true that no plausible objections may be made to the wisdom and justice of any of its parts. Why should part of the earth be scorched by intense heat, while other parts are rendered unfit for the support of animal life, by cold and darkness? Why should sandy deserts, rocks, and barren mountains constitute part of a globe, designed for habitation? Why are briers, thorns, and poisonous plants produced by a soil, the object of which would seem to be animal support? Why should a profusion of rain be sent at one season, and the earth, at another, be rendered fruitless by dearth? Why doth the Creator cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is? On the wilderness, where there is no man? Is it to satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

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We believe, on good ground, that the Supreme Being is uniformly benevolent. Yet it will not be said that the state of the world is such as we should previously have expected from a being of such character. We should have supposed, that creatures produced by a benevolent God, would have been virtuous and happy? We experience disappointment and pains. We witness the success of slander and unjust measures; the elevation of characters the most impious and profligate, and the depression of others, in whom are exhibited eminent virtues. Human life is maintained with anxiety and labor, and frequently terminated in agony which cannot be described, nor long endured. We observe prisons and the instruments of execution. We hear of wars in which thousands, and tens of thousands are instantly slain on the field of battle, or left with mutilated bodies to writhe under the anguish of their wounds.

Now if this world is part of God's dominion, and every particle of it is sustained by divine power, with all these appearances so different from what we should expect, it would be no important argument against the divine origin of the Gospel, should that likewise be found to contain some things, or be attended with some circumstances for which we are unable to account.

It is not only a fact, that in the divine proceedings, made known by the works of nature, there are many things, for which we can give no account; but it is equally true, that this can be no matter of reasonable surprise. To understand the propriety of any measure, it is necessary to have a knowledge of the end, in relation to which the measure is adopted. In this knowledge is implied an acquaintance with circumstances and objects which may be effected. But such a knowledge in relation to all measures, is that to which no human beings can make pretensions. There must, then, be some measures, of whose propriety we cannot judge. In the administration of an extensive civil government, many measures, wise and just, when viewed in all their connexions, would appear, if taken in an insulated view, unequal, imprudent, or oppressive. Now, as the divine government is, be-

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yond all comparison, more extensive than any concerted and administered by men, it is the more to be expected, that some of its measures should be unaccountable to us, if not seemingly unjust.

Christianity is part of God's universal government. It is itself as represented by its author and his apostles, a vastly extensive plan for the advancement of created happiness and divine glory. The full extent of its bearings and connexions is perhaps unknown to any created being. It would therefore be perfectly unreasonable to deny its divine origin, even should it be found that the design of some of its parts is unintelligible, or some of its measures seemingly incongruous.

I now proceed to notice particular objections; and

1. The want of clearness. This has in part, been anticipated; that having been said, from which it follows, that some parts of the divine administration must be obscure to us from the limited nature of our intellectual powers. It is, however, not to be questioned, that without any enlargement of human intellect, Deity might communicate more light than he has on the subject of religion; and that some subjects, treated in the Scriptures, which are now involved in much obscurity, might, had Deity seen fit, have been rendered more luminous. As the object of revelation must have been to supply the deficiency of nature's light, any want of clearness in the Christian religion appears to some persons a very strong proof that this religion is not divine.

It is utterly impossible to perceive the connexion between this conclusion, and the premises, from which it is drawn. Did we know beforehand the precise object which God would have in making a revelation, if one were made; and did we know that Christianity fell short of that object, I allow, that it would be a fair and certain conclusion, that Christianity is not from God; for he will always produce a wise proportion between ends and means. But that Deity should communicate no light in addition to that of nature, unless the greatest possible degree were imparted, is an opinion resting on no solid ground. To all

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mankind, God has made a revelation. By the works and providence of God his existence and something of his perfections are revealed. This revelation is acknowledged to fall very far short of what man could desire. There is, by universal acknowledgment, a want of clearness. Now, on supposition, that another revelation should come from the same Author, how does it appear certain, or even probable, that no darkness would remain? You say, perhaps, "If Deity should make a special revelation, we can see no reason why it should not be so perfect as to give full satisfaction; and present to the human understanding all that light, which it is capable of receiving." I say, likewise, that we can see no reason why this should not have been done in the first instance; and why that revelation, which God has been pleased to make in his works, leaves in obscurity so many important subjects. In both cases, God doubtless had wise reasons; but we may be unable to discover those reasons in either. Were it capable of being proved, that light on religious subjects could not be obtained, either in greater measure, or with more facility, from the christian Scriptures, than from the works of nature, there would, indeed, be a very strong objection against their divine origin. But this will not be asserted; if it should, it will not be believed. There is, indeed, scarcely a ground of comparison between the light of Scripture and that of natural religion.

To place the subject in a view somewhat different. The immortality of the soul was a matter of much uncertainty among reflecting heathen. They would have thought it a great favor to have had assurance on this subject. But did it ever enter their minds, that if God should see fit to give satisfaction on this point, he would be bound to remove all darkness from every other?

To render the objection, under consideration, more formidable, we are sometimes told of the great variety of opinions, which have existed, and still continue to exist as to the real meaning of Scripture. The Father of light, it is suggested, could never be the author of a religion, by which such various and opposite systems are supported.

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To this it may be replied,

1. That the Father of light is the Author of the system of nature; yet on this system of nature, men have endeavored to support various and opposite opinions; nor has there been wanting a great degree of warmth and acrimony in support of them. Now, an argument which fails in one case, cannot be relied on in another.

2. Human laws and constitutions of government are designed to be peculiarly plain. In no other composition, perhaps, is perspicuity so much an object. Yet upright lawyers are not always agreed, as to the import of laws; nor are upright civilians better agreed, as to the meaning of those constitutions by which they are to be governed.

3. It is to be considered, that all uncertainty as to religious opinions does, by no means, arise from the obscurity of Scripture; but much is the result of inattention, or the want of fairness in the reader. The objection seems to proceed on the supposition that those who consult the Scriptures, do it uniformly with fair, unprejudiced minds; and that the Scriptures themselves are exclusively answerable for that variety of opinions, which they have been called to support. Are inattention, sloth, and prejudice, strangers in this our world? Do these never influence political, or philosophical opinions, or decisions in courts of justice? If they have a general influence on the human mind, and truth is perpetually suffering by their means, can we be sure, that they have no effect on religious opinions? and that men uniformly exercise on this subject, what is so very uncommon on every other, I mean impartiality? Now so far as diversity and opposition of sentiment arise from sloth, inattention, or prejudice, it is unjust and even absurd to make Christianity answerable.

But it may be conceded, that some portion of this diversity arises not from any thing criminal in the persons entertaining it; but from a native difference in the talents of those who consult the Scriptures, or from their different degrees of knowledge.

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The objection may now assume this form,

As the soul of a man of moderate talents, and little information, has the same value in the divine judgment, as the soul of a man of superior intellect and information, is it not certain that God, should he make a revelation, would render it equally clear to men of every description?

This objection is plausible; let us see if it be solid.

At the head of one family is a man of good judgment and much observation. These qualities enable him to cultivate his ground, and to manage his affairs so advantageously that the wants of his family are well supplied. At the head of another family is a man of equal integrity, but of far less discernment and skill in conducting affairs. The consequence is, that the condition of himself and family is uncomfortable. Yet sustenance, clothing, and comfort, are of as much value to one person, as to another. So is health; yet God has not given to all the same ability to discover means, either to secure its continuance, or effect its restoration.

The difficulty, if there is one, is as real, and of the same nature in both these cases, as in the other; though the degree of difficulty may be supposed greater in the first, as that relates to the future world, and the two last, to the present only. We will, therefore, recur to the revelation which God has made in his works. Talents and information are, at least, as necessary to enable men to obtain religious truths from the works of God, as from his word. Yet there is the same diversity of talents and knowledge among heathen, as among Christians. The volume of nature is, therefore, in this respect, liable to precisely the same objection, as the volume of inspiration.

Besides; the objection in view implies more, it is believed, than is considered by those who make it. It lies not only against Christianity and natural religion, but against any written or standing revelation whatever. For if the Scriptures were enlarged; if the subjects on which they treat were multiplied, or more were said on each subject, persons of great intellectual powers and of much information, would with the same ap-

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plication, receive more light than others of a different description. As some understand the works of nature, so do they understand the Scriptures more readily than others. The same would be true, to whatever degree the Scriptures were enlarged. Each doctrine must be conveyed in words and sentences. These words and sentences could not, without a constant miracle, be equally intelligible to all.

2. Another objection against the Christian religion is its want of universality. If it be of such vast importance to mankind, why, it is asked, was it not introduced at an earlier period, and why is it not now enjoyed by the whole world?

In answer, it may be observed, that there is one thing relative to this subject, on which both Christians and infidels are agreed, viz. that Christianity is a communication which Deity was under no obligation to make. Certainly this is the opinion of infidels, for they believe it a communication which he never did make. Christians believe that the whole system of their religion is a matter of grace; that God was neither bound to conceal such a plan, nor to reveal it. It is hence extremely evident, that the charge of injustice cannot be supported on the ground of a partial communication. A favor granted to one, does not give right to another. Those who have not the light of revealed religion, have, however, as much light, as if no such religion had existed.

Still it may be urged, that if part of mankind were in great need of Christianity, the wants of the other part were no less; and if all needed it alike, it may be thought unreasonable to believe it would not have been communicated alike to all. We may be wholly unable to discover those reasons which induced the most High to make this discrimination; but how far this circumstance is from disproving the divinity of that which is thus partially bestowed, will appear, if we consider how unequally the Divine favors are generally distributed. Part of the observations which were made under the last particular, are equally valid in regard to the present objection. Whether Christianity is true or not, most certain it is, that Deity has im-

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parted to some that light which is withholden from others. One person is brought into existence even among pagan nations, under very considerable advantages for obtaining a knowledge of morality and religion; while others are born in the midst of ignorance the most profound, and crimes the most hateful. What a vast difference between the condition of a person educated at Rome, in the best days of the republic, and the condition of one, ushered into life among the savages of New Holland! Yet this difference takes place under the government of that God, to whom believers attribute Christianity; and surely their opponents cannot be certain that he will not, in one case, do that which he has undeniably done in another.

To say nothing of the inequality which presents itself to our view in every direction, the disparity between different orders of beings, and between different individuals belonging to the same order; the ease and plenty enjoyed by some, and the want and misery endured by others; I see no reason why we should not, in removing the objection before us, compare the condition of an African or New Hollander with that of a person in the most enlightened part of the christian world. For, whatever may be the infidel's opinion, as to the origin of Christianity, he will not have the hardiness to deny that the general principles of religion are better understood by Christians than by pagans. He cannot in decency deny, that common Christians have far more rational and consistent views of the Supreme Being, the object of their worship and confidence, than were entertained by heathen of the same standing in society. Nor will he assert that the former do not exceed the latter in the correctness of their views of morality. It is, therefore, a fact, whatever be the origin of Christianity, that those who enjoy its light have greater, far greater advantages than others, for moral improvement. This fact, which is undeniable, has taken place, it is to be considered, under the government of God.

The light, communicated by Christianity, is indeed much greater, on supposition of its being a Divine revelation, than on supposition of its originating from man; and of course, the dif-

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ference in the advantage of those who do and those who do not enjoy it, will be greater in one case, than in the other. The objection under consideration is equally real, whether brought against a fact which infidels admit, or against a fact which Christians believe; though as to degree, it is acknowledged there is some difference. If, therefore, the infidel repeat his objection, by saying that if part of mankind needed Christianity, the wants of the other part were no less; and if all need it alike, it is unreasonable to believe that it would not have been communicated alike to all, it is to be replied, that he is as really concerned to remove this difficulty, as the Christian; because it bears against facts, which both acknowledge.

To these considerations it may be proper to subjoin, that the gospel no where conveys this idea, that those to whom this religion was never made known, will be condemned for their disbelief. Those, if any such should be found, who possess real conformity of heart to the Supreme Being, will be accepted through the merits of an unknown Redeemer; those destitute of this, will be punished, not for their disbelief of the christian religion, but for their crimes.

The enemies of Christianity object, that this religion has given rise, not only to many disputes of a theological nature, but to wars and persecutions. They pretend to consider it incredible, that such consequences should result from a religion divinely communicated.

The fact admits no doubt. It is not to be denied that while Christians have been, in many instances, the objects of persecution from the pagans, they have on several occasions turned upon their persecutors, rendering evil for evil. Nor have some denominations of Christians treated their opponents with less severity, than the general mass of Christians once experienced from the pagans. On occasion of religion, wars have been maintained with unrelenting ferocity.

Now, if it can be shown, that bloodshed, persecution, and crimes are inculcated, or even allowed by the Christian religion, the objection, we are now considering, is not only formidable,

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but unanswerable. The infidel has, therefore, nothing to do but to take the New Testament, and indicate the passages which either inculcate or justify these enormities. This he will not attempt. He knows, that both the Author of Christianity and his missionaries uniformly taught good will and forbearance; and that their mode of proceeding was, with meekness to instruct those who opposed them, if God peradventure would give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth.

With what reason, with what decorum can Christianity be made answerable for crimes which it condemns, and for a species of conduct diametrically opposite to that of its founder and his servants? If Christianity does not allow persecution, but requires forbearance, it follows that those who are guilty of persecution violate the Gospel. In other words, wars and persecutions have been commenced and maintained, not because men were influenced by Christianity, but because they were not. How wonderfully absurd, that Christianity should be called to answer for crimes which result from a rejection of its precepts?

Not fully satisfied even now, you ask, whether God did not distinctly foresee all the events which would be consequent to the christian religion;—all the bad purposes to which it would be perverted? Beyond all question he did. But does God never give that of which his creatures make an ill use? Property is a blessing, and it is bestowed under a divine providence. Does it not give rise to much fraud, and numerous litigations? Food is a blessing; yet men sometimes use it to their injury. Intellectual powers are evidently the gift of God; yet they are not unfrequently employed in forming and executing great plans of villany.

Though many persons have, in all ages, perverted religion, and made it the occasion of many crimes, its effects on the whole have been highly favorable to the present condition of man. The state of society has always been best, where the doctrines of this religion have been most powerfully enforced and cordially received. That the fact should be thus, it would be

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natural to expect, from the moral purity of that character, which the Scriptures ascribe to the Supreme Being; and from that rectitude of intention, without which they represent human actions as destitute of worth. On this subject, it would, I believe, be perfectly safe to appeal to any unbeliever, of good sense and tolerable candor, whether he would not consider his property, the life and honor of his family, somewhat more secure in a village whose inhabitants were sincerely endeavoring to regulate their hearts and manners by the Christian religion, than in a place where that religion was uniformly rejected. I would not ask whether the conduct of nominal believers is always better than the conduct of infidels; for Christianity, as we have said, is not answerable for the conduct of those who will not obey it. My only inquiry would be, whether those who are Christians in earnest, are not from their character, good members of society. I would carry the appeal somewhat further, and ask, whether when professing Christians are found to be of suspicious integrity, remarkably perspicacious as to their own interest, and as remarkable for disregarding the interest of others, any spectator, infidel or not, does not immediately conclude, that such professing Christians either do not believe Christianity, or do not conscientiously regard it? Now this is a confession, that if they did conscientiously regard Christtanity, they would be upright men; in other words, that this religion, so far as it is embraced, will produce probity and social virtues.

4. I shall notice but one more objection; it is that Christianity renders its votaries gloomy. This last term may have different meanings. If by gloominess are understood moroseness and superstition, the charge arises entirely from ignorance of that religion, against which it is brought. But if the term is used, as it often is, to designate the absence of levity, and a seriousness of aspect and deportment, such effects, it is granted, do result from Christianity. That trifling gaiety, which is so frequently and so inconsiderately praised, is commonly found in minds vacant of any important object. Let some great object interest the mind, and this levity vanishes. That

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illustrious man, who was the glory of our country, and an honor to the human race, is said very seldom to have relaxed his countenance during the American war. The reason is obvious. He felt his responsibility; he felt that on his shoulders, rested the burden of a nation's cares.

Now the Christian religion presents to our view an object the most grand, captivating, and noble, that can occupy the human mind. He who has a lively faith in this religion, considers himself as entrusted with the care of an immortal soul. He views actions in their relation to a future life; and has, therefore, no time for levity and idle pleasure.

The Christian is a man of business; he is in a responsible station, and must be serious. Whether those by whom this is reprobated and ridiculed, can give as good a reason for their levity, it becomes them to consider.

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LECTURE XXVI.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

In a number of preceding lectures, it has been my object to prove the truth of the Christian religion. But the truth of Christianity is one thing, and the inspiration of the Scriptures is another. Thucydides, it is believed, has given a true account of the plague at Athens. Sallust has given a true history of Cataline's conspiracy. But in neither instance was the author inspired. The truth of Christianity certainly follows from the truth of that history, which is contained in the four Gospels, whether these Gospels were written by inspiration, or not. In these accounts it is stated, that Jesus Christ gave soundness to the lame, hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, and life to the dead; that he himself rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Now if these accounts correspond with fact; if miracles of this surprising nature were actually wrought by Christ, who claimed to be the Messiah, it certainly follows that he was such, and by consequence, that his religion is true.

But, though the inspiration of the sacred writers is distinct from the truth of the Christian religion, the former is by no means unimportant. On this subject inquiry will be made in this and the following lectures.

By inspiration I mean such an influence on the mind of a person, as either communicates to him something previously unknown, or brings so clearly to his recollection what was once known, as effectually to prevent him from conveying to others any thing inconsistent with truth.

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The truth of Christianity being proved, it follows, that God has sent a divine Instructor from heaven. It is to be presumed, at first sight, that the message with which he was charged could be of no ordinary import. We know that it was not. By the instructions of Jesus Christ, points were established, in the investigation of which the greatest human powers had, for thousands of years been unsuccessfully employed; points most intimately connected with the best interests of mankind, both in regard to a present and future life. No question can be so interesting to our species as this: "Is man as a living agent mortal, or immortal? Does he, like other animals, and like vegetables, after a short period lose existence forever; or is his future life equally durable with that of God himself; and must years, ages, and myriads of ages, in regard to him revolve in endless succession?" This question was fairly at issue in the pagan world. Scarcely did an individual philosopher speak with unwavering confidence on the subject, much less was it considered as well decided. On this subject Jesus Christ removed every doubt: He abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. He taught that present virtue and vice are inseparably connected with future rewards and punishments of endless duration. As connected with this, he made known a new dispensation, marked with very distinct characters. The pardon of sin, and the remuneration of those who serve God, are declared to be the result of mercy, exercised on the foundation of that atonement which he, the Son of God, has made by his own sufferings. He also, it is declared, is commissioned both to govern, and to judge the world. The full value of this information cannot be duly appreciated without reflecting on that palpable darkness, which had overspread the earth. Now my remark is, that after such instruction had been conveyed from heaven, in a most extraordinary manner, even by the Son of God, it does not seem probable that no measures should be taken for its preservation. If after a space of several thousand years, information of such interesting import was conveyed to the world; does it seem consistent with divine wisdom, that it should be suffered entirely to

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disappear, or to be universally confounded with error? An argument of this kind, I well know, is far from being conclusive, because we are little qualified to judge, in many cases, what would and what would not be consistent with the wisdom of God. I use the argument for no other purpose, than to show that previously to any direct proof on the subject, there would be a presumption that care would be taken to preserve in the world a knowledge of truth once revealed. As to the precise degree of this presumption I will not determine; but that it would exist with considerable force will, it is believed, be generally allowed.

To the twelve disciples themselves, our Lord communicated instruction immediately. No inspiration could render a doctrine more certain, than it was rendered by his teaching. Had his discourses been written by them directly from his mouth, or under his inspection, I do not see that any inspiration could have been requisite. But we do not know that any part of the Gospels was written till after our Saviour's death. That they all were not, is most certain. Now though memoirs, written by upright men, his intimate associates, concerning what Jesus did and taught, during the time of his public ministry, would indeed be exceedingly valuable, no one could be certain that, with the best intentions, they had on all occasions made a correct representation of what they had heard from their Master. Indeed it would be little less than impossible, that they should so perfectly retain in memory his discourses, some of which were of considerable length, as accurately to repeat them many years afterwards. It was necessary, then, that what they had heard should be brought to their recollection. Moreover, many things which were important to be made known, our Lord deemed it expedient at that time to omit. Here were two occasions, therefore, on which inspiration was extremely to be desired.

Let us now inquire whether Jesus Christ gave to his disciples any promise of that aid, which the circumstances just mentioned seem to have rendered necessary.

Our Saviour, both before and after his resurrection, spake very distinctly of supernatural aid, which his apostles should re-

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ceive after his removal from them: I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth. The consideration that the spirit to be communicated, is called the Spirit of truth, leads us to consider the conveyance of truth, the great object of his coming. After our Lord's resurrection, he commissioned his disciples to go and teach all nations; and in order that they might be qualified to do this, he promised to be with them always even unto the end of the world. As he required them to communicate to others, what he had delivered to them; and as he had engaged to be with them while they were doing this, it is implied that he would afford them all that assistance which the discharge of their duty required. They were not commanded, nor even permitted to assume an apostolical character, until the bestowment of those influences which had been promised: Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high. So far as the testimony of St. Luke is to be relied on, I know not that any thing could be more express and satisfactory as to the general truth, that supernatural aid should be given to the apostles.

From examination it will be apparent what kind of aid the apostles were encouraged to expect; viz. precisely the same that we have already mentioned as necessary, aid to their memories, that they might with precision represent the deportment and the doctrines of their Master; and a direct communication of new truths, additional to those which they had heard from him: These things, saith Jesus, have I spoken, being yet with you. But the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. With a divine influence of this nature on their minds, they were perfectly qualified to transmit to succeeding ages an account of the works and doctrines of Jesus Christ. But there were some things which our Saviour, during his personal ministry on earth, forbore to teach his disciples, on account of their dulness of apprehension, which were necessary for them both to

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know and to promulgate: I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; Howbeit, when He who is the Spirit of truth shall come, He will guide you into all truth. Whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and shall show you things to come.

Such promises as these were made by our Saviour to his disciples. Matthew and John were his disciples, they were among those, therefore, to whom the promise was made. That Christ fulfils his promises, will not be doubted by any who believe his divine authority, which has been proved in preceding lectures.

It may possibly be suggested, that the promises of our Saviour related not to the writings of his disciples, but to their public preaching. I answer, that in his language is contained no such limitation. The object for which they were intrusted with supernatural powers, was the preservation and diffusion of that truth, which their Master had revealed. They were to be his witnesses. With this object their writings were connected even more intimately than their preaching. Their discourses, i. e. their oral testimony, were heard by comparatively few; and many things which they contained were soon forgotten. Their written narratives, on the contrary, have been read by thousands, in various parts of the world, for more than seventeen centuries; and will continue to be read so long as Christianity shall exist. Can it be truly asserted that Christ's promise: The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you, was accomplished, if, when they engaged in that part of their apostolic work, in which the cause of truth, and the interests of virtue and righteousness were most deeply concerned, and which it was morally impossible to perform without divine influence, they were left merely to their own unassisted powers?

To use the words of Michaelis, "The apostles were to testify of Christ, because they had been with him from the beginning, and knew all that he had taught and done. The promised Teacher was to testify through them, and to convince the world. They had the assurance then, that whenever they proclaimed

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the truth of the gospel, they should be assisted by the Holy Ghost, an assistance which they had not during the life of Christ, or before the miraculous gifts were imparted on the day of pentecost. It consisted then, not in ordinary gifts as they are called, but in real and proper inspiration. Now, continues he, can we suppose that the apostles enjoyed this inspiration when they preached the gospel in harangues, heard only by a few, and that it ceased whenever they commenced the more important task of delivering the christian precepts in writings which were to serve as the basis of faith and knowledge to all mankind." We may, I think, therefore, with entire confidence, rely on the inspiration of such narratives relating to Christ and his doctrines, as were published by any of those to whom this promise was made.

This conclusion applies to the writings of Matthew and John, as they were among those to whom the promise was made. The epistles will be distinctly considered. Previously to which, it is necessary to inquire, whether the Gospels of Mark and Luke stand on the same foundation as those already mentioned. Neither Mark nor Luke was of the number of the twelve disciples; yet both had an opportunity of conversing familiarly with those who were. "St. Mark," says Calmet, "according to the greatest part both of ancients and moderns, was the disciple and interpreter of St. Peter." This afforded him the best opportunity that could be enjoyed by any but an eye witness, for ascertaining the facts contained in his narrative. Michaelis* allows that Mark "wrote with the approbation, and under the protection of St. Peter." Dr. Benson† states an additional circumstance of great importance, "We are told by the ancients, that St. Mark the companion of St. Peter, wrote his history from what he knew himself, or had learned from others. But that, before St. Mark's Gospel was published, St. Peter is expressly said to have confirmed it by his authority, that it might henceforth be read in the churches." This is asserted by Dr. Benson on the authority of Eusebius. (L. 2. cap. xiv.) In addi-

* Vol. 1. 91. † Watson's Tracts, V. iv. 471.

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tion to this he quotes the following words from Jerome, "Mark wrote a short Gospel from what he had heard of Peter, at the request of the brethren at Rome; which, when Peter knew, he approved and published it in the churches, commanding the reading of it by his own authority."

Similar to this is the testimony concerning Luke. He is several times mentioned by St. Paul, in terms of regard and affection. He is enumerated among Paul's fellow laborers, and is called "the beloved physician." As he accompanied St. Paul in many of his journeys, and participated his labors, he enjoyed the most important facilities for ascertaining doctrinal truth, i. e. on supposition the latter was inspired, (a subject to which our attention will soon be directed.) In addition to this, the circumstance that Luke for so long a time accompanied St. Paul, must have brought him to the knowledge and intimacy of some who had attended Christ in his ministry, and been eye witnesses of his miracles.

In the case of Luke as well as Mark, we are told by the ancients, says Benson, "that he wrote his history from what he knew himself, or had learned from others." He does not profess to have been an eye witness, but to have compiled his account from scrupulously examining and collating different sources of evidence: Forasmuch as many have undertaken to compose a narrative of those things which have been accomplished among us, as they who were from the beginning, eye witnesses, and afterwards ministers of the word, delivered them to us; I have also determined, having exactly traced every thing from the first, to write a most particular account to thee, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mayest know the certainty of these matters, in which thou hast been instructed.

Agreeably to this, it is asserted by Jerome, as quoted by Benson, that "Luke learned his Gospel, not only of Paul, who had not conversed with our Lord in the flesh, but of the other apostles;" * and that Luke's Gospel was confirmed by St. Paul,

* Watson's Tracts, Vol. iv. 173.

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and rested upon his authority, is affirmed by Tertullian. As the Gospel according to St. Mark was approved by St. Peter; and that of St. Luke by St. Paul; who were both furnished with apostolic illumination, so we are informed by Eusebius, that when the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, had become very public, St. John, whose inspiration has already been proved, saw these Gospels and approved them, and confirmed the truth of them by his own testimony. (Eccl. Hist. p. 59.) Similar testimony is given by Jerome, as appears from the following quotation, "When John had read the volumes of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he approved of the history, and confirmed the truth of what they had said."

Moreover this Gospel of Luke is quoted, according to Dr. Campbell, by St. Paul, under the name of Scripture, the same appellation that he gives to those writings of the Old Testament which he tells us, were given by inspiration of God. "It may, indeed, be justly affirmed, that Paul appears to have been the first, who quoted this Gospel, though he does not name Luke, and quoted it, as of authority. In writing to Timothy, he has these words: For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox, that treadeth out the corn; and, The laborer is worthy of his hire. The former of these sayings is a quotation from the pentateuch. (Deut. 25: 4.) The latter is found nowhere else in these terms, but in Luke, whose very words the apostle has adopted."*

I am not, indeed, prepared to say that the evidence supporting the inspiration of the various parts of Scripture, is precisely equal. In regard to some parts of that volume, it is stronger and more obviously decisive, than with respect to others. It would be incorrect to say that in this respect, there is no difference between the two Gospels, written by Christ's habitual followers, to whom he had promised to send the Holy Spirit, who should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, and the other two Gospels, whose authors did not,

* Campb. Pref. to Luke.

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that we are ascertained, receive the same promise. But inequality of evidence in regard to two objects, does not disprove its adequateness in either case. As historians, both Mark and Luke had easy access to abundant sources of information; and their testimony in general is amply confirmed by the testimony of Matthew and John. Luke's Gospel is, by Paul, himself divinely inspired, denominated Scripture, and mentioned with the same respect, as the ancient volume, which he asserts to have been given by inspiration. Luke's Gospel was, according to historical evidence, examined and approved by Paul; that of Mark by Peter, and both by St. John. The object of inspiration is to give certainty to that which is written under its guidance. And I see not why the certainty of what is examined and approved by an inspired apostle, is not as great, as the certainty of that, which is written by such a person. In addition to this, they have in all ages of the church, been received as possessing divine authority. No doubts were ever entertained, as to admitting them into the sacred canon.

I now come to notice the epistles, contained in the New Testament. With the exception of Paul, the authors of these belonged to the twelve disciples, to whom were made those promises of divine illumination, which have several times been mentioned. Whenever, therefore, they had occasion to exercise their apostolic functions, whether by writing, or speaking, the word of their divine Master was pledged for their direction: That the Holy Spirit should guide them into all truth. Under such illumination, they actually professed to write. St. Peter says that the apostles preached the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. He places the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures on the same ground: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. John represents his own inspiration and that of his brethren, as so manifest that every man who knew God, would listen to them: We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us. He that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the

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spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. All the churches and individuals, that received these epistles, must have considered them either as true or false. That they were believed false, will not be asserted by any, who considers the proofs which in preceding lectures, were brought forward to support the christian religion, or the great regard which was paid to these epistles by christian churches. But, if they believed them true, they must have believed them written under divine illumination; because the epistles themselves claim to have been thus written.

At the time when the apostles were asserting such claims, it should not be forgotten that they were exhibiting numerous and public miracles, restoring limbs to the lame, sight to the blind, and health to the sick. Now, if they falsely pretended to divine illumination, would God have continued to them these supernatural powers? Would he have given his own sanction to pretensions which had no other foundation than enthusiasm or fraud?

It is now apparent, therefore, that the author of Christianity, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, before his crucifixion, promised that the Holy Spirit should lead the apostles into all truth; that after his resurrection, he commanded them to continue at Jerusalem until they should receive miraculous powers, qualifying them for their apostolical office; that they received these powers, and went forth preaching every where, the Lord also working with them; that not only in their preaching, but in their more important duty of committing their doctrines to writing, they professed to be divinely instructed; and that they to whom these writings were sent, must have received them as the result of divine inspiration.

So far as this argument depends on the promise of our Lord to his twelve disciples, it does not apply to the writings of St. Paul, who was not of that number, and who speaks of himself, as one born out of due time. As his epistles constitute so important a part of the Christian volume, their inspiration will be the subject of inquiry in the next lecture.

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LECTURE XXVII.

INSPIRATION.

In my last lecture, I endeavored to show the inspiration of those parts of Scripture which have for their author any one of the twelve disciples who received from Christ a special commission, and to whom Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit, teaching them all things and bringing all things to their remembrance. As Mark and Luke were not of the twelve, their narratives were distinctly considered. St. Paul's writings, for a similar reason, and likewise because they compose so valuable a portion of the New Testament, are entitled to a separate enquiry.

The question now before us, is not whether the epistles attributed to Paul, were written by him, nor whether he was an apostle of Christ; nor whether he was honestly engaged in the christian cause; but only, whether in writing these epistles, he was so far guided by divine influence, as infallibly to secure him from communicating any thing inconsistent with truth, on the subject of religion.

Paul, it is well known, was an unbeliever not only during the ministry of Christ, but for some time after his resurrection. Nor was Christianity a subject in which he took but little interest. He rejected it not with decision only, but with strong aversion; proclaiming against all its adherents a war of extermination. By what means his religious opinions and character

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were changed, we are informed in a speech of his own, which he addressed to king Agrippa. In this address, after acknowledging that he had formerly thought himself bound to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; and that, in agreement with this persuasion, he had imprisoned and persecuted the saints, he narrates the circumstances and events of a journey to Damascus, which he had undertaken for a similar purpose: As I went to Damascus with power and authority and commission from the chief priests, at mid-day, O king, I saw in the way, a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them who journeyed with me; and when they were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking to me, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me. He said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Thus you see in what manner St. Paul received his apostolic character. He was commissioned as directly from Christ, as were the twelve disciples. In his writings, allusion is often made to the extraordinary manner in which he became a disciple, and a preacher of Christianity. Addressing the Corinthians, he says: Last of all He, that is, Christ, was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. Again: Am I not an apostle? Have not I seen Jesus Christ our Lord? In view of this, he styles himself, when writing to the Galatians, an apostle not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who hath raised him from the dead. Agreeably to this, he adds: I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel, which was preached of me, was not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In view of all these facts, you will not doubt, I apprehend,

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that St. Paul's claim to a divine mission, i. e. to an apostolic character, was as well founded as that of the twelve, who were commissioned by Jesus Christ before he had ascended. Whatever divine aid was promised to them, it may be presumed, therefore, would not be withheld from him. It is necessary, however, to view the matter with more minuteness.

Our Lord is represented as appearing to him for the purpose of making him a minister and a witness, both of the things which he had already seen, and of those which might afterwards be divinely communicated to him; for thus saith our Saviour: Thou art to be a witness of those things, in the which I will appear to thee. Now, by those things, are meant either facts or doctrines. If doctrines are meant, then St. Paul had a promise of receiving, from time to time, by divine inspiration, a knowledge of religious truths. But if facts are meant, it is very obvious, that their importance is derived wholly from their connexion with doctrine. Even the fact of our Saviour's resurrection would have no special importance attached to it, were it not a confirmation of all the doctrines contained in his religion. The end is always more important than the means. It would not be credible, therefore, that divine inspiration should have been imparted to Paul, to enable him to make a correct statement of facts, and that at the same time, nothing should be done to prevent a wrong exhibition of that doctrinal truth, which it was the sole object of these facts to substantiate.

Besides, some of the declarations, which have been already recited, relate expressly not to facts merely, but to the doctrines of Christianity: The Gospel which I preached was not after man; for I neither received it of man; neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of the Holy Ghost.

Some persons may possibly imagine, that the words now read, though they are sufficient to prove the general inspiration of the apostle, will not prove any thing as to his being guided by the divine spirit in writing his epistles. To this I make a twofold reply. 1. From the general object of his mission. 2. From particular passages contained in his epistles.

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1. From the general object of his mission. This was to teach that system of divine truth, which constitutes the Christian religion. Whenever, therefore, he was called to officiate as a religious instructor, we may confidently presume, that his mind was constantly under such a divine influence, as to secure him from communicating error. Religious sentiments, committed to writing, it was observed in the last lecture, are of more importance than those which are conveyed by oral enunciation. The latter are less permanent and less extensive in their influence than the former. The addresses which they made, were heard by comparatively few: their epistles have been translated into various languages,—are appealed to as the standard of truth in distant countries,—and will be thus used by the whole christian church in all future ages to the end of the world. Writing epistles on religious subjects, was, therefore, a part of apostolic duty, even more important than public preaching.

Now, as Paul was a chosen vessel to bear Christ's name before Gentiles and kings;—as Christ appeared to him on purpose to make him a minister and a witness;—as the Gospel, which he preached, was not received from man, but by revelation of the Holy Ghost;—can it be imagined, that when writing on the subject of religion to christian churches, thereby giving instruction, the effects of which would be more extensive and permanent than those of public preaching, he should be left without guidance, and be as little secure from error as any upright Christian in ordinary life?

In the 2d place, we will examine some of the passages, contained in these epistles of Paul, to ascertain what were his own declarations as to the subject under consideration. If any man, saith he, think himself a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge, that the things which I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord. By this language, he claims to be an infallible guide in matters of religion. Again: (1 Cor. 2: 12) Now we have received the spirit, which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wis-

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dom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul uses this language: He that despiseth, despiseth not man but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit. (1 Thess. 4: 8.) Here again he professes to be divinely taught, and to communicate to others, that only which he had received from God.

In another epistle, we find the following assertion: We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God has ordained before the world, unto our glory. This, saith he, God hath revealed to us by his Spirit. In relation both to himself and others, St. Paul adopts this language: We have the mind of Christ.

Now, it is to be remembered, that while St. Paul made these high claims,—while he professed to be under the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit, it is a conceded point, that he had received, immediately from Christ, an apostolic commission,—that he had seen Christ in the way to Damascus,—and that he possessed and openly exercised miraculous powers; agreeably to the following words: Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds. In his epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul speaks of himself as having, among them, ministered the spirit and wrought miracles. He often appeals to miracles in support of his apostolic character. Now, agreeably to what has been already observed, it appears highly incongruous, that either St. Paul, or another disciple, should receive miraculous powers in order that his doctrine might be substantiated, unless he were so far inspired, as to secure this doctrine from any mixture of error. And it is yet more incredible, that these miraculous powers should have been continued, if he professed to be inspired, when in fact he was not. Can it be imagined, that God would enable a man to work miracles, or to speak more correctly, that God himself would work miracles to substantiate false pretensions? St. Paul, it appears from the passages already cited, did claim to be considered as writing what he had received from the Holy Spirit. If, therefore, he did not write

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under a divine influence, his pretensions were groundless. Say, if you please, that St. Paul did not intend to make false pretensions, but only mistook in supposing himself guided by inspiration. It is indeed, extraordinary, that on such a subject, a man should mistake. The error, if it could have existed, would, we acknowledge, exonerate the apostle from the charge of intentional fraud. But whatever might be possible in regard to him, Deity was not deceived. If the apostle was not inspired, He infallibly knew it. Yet the laws of nature were controlled at the apostle's word. Hereby the divine approbation of him was testified. He exhibited the signs of an apostle; and they to whom he preached were not only justified in receiving his doctrines, but were bound to receive them.

Does it well comport with the character of God, to control the established course of nature in favor of a man, however honest, who erroneously professed to be guided by divine inspiration? The conclusion is, that St. Paul, agreeably to his professions, wrote on the subjects of religion, as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.

The argument will be confirmed, if we advert to this fact, that in some of St. Paul's epistles are contained predictions of future events.

"In the writings of Paul, it is foretold that a certain power should arise, which would assume the character and attributes of divinity, change the laws and ordinances of heaven, work signs and lying wonders to confirm its usurped authority and impious tenets, and persecute with unrelenting fury, those who should refuse to submit to its dominion. What is still more remarkable, it is foretold that this power would profess the Christian religion, for the man of sin is represented as sitting, not in the temples of idols, but in the temple of God; and some of the doctrines and practices, which he would impose on mankind, are specified. Let any one seriously consider this account, with all its particulars, and he will be convinced that nothing was more improbable, than the appearance of such a power, at the time when its rise was predicted. Who would imagine,

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that any one would dare to usurp the place of Christ, or carry his impiety and arrogance so far, as to claim the titles of Lord and God, and the attributes of holiness and infallibility? Who would have supposed, that Christians, in the days of the apostles so enlightened and so jealous of their spiritual liberty, would ever become so stupid and indifferent, as to allow such a power to raise itself on the ruins of their religion and their reason. Nothing could have been more remote from the apprehensions of men. Yet these most improbable predictions have been punctually fulfilled in all their circumstances, as protestant writers have unanswerably proved." (Dick, 89, 90.)

These prophecies are part of St. Paul's epistles. Now if part was given by inspiration, it is the more credible that the whole was thus given.

While inquiring concerning the inspiration of St. Paul's writings, we ought by no means to forget the testimony given on this subject by St. Peter. That the latter wrote under a divine influence, was, it is hoped, sufficiently proved in the last lecture. But in his estimation, the writings of St. Paul were to be considered as having the same authority with those of the Old Testament: Even as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, hath written to you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they who are unlearned or unstable, wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. From these words it is evident, that St. Peter considered the writings of his illustrious fellow-laborer as Scripture; a term exclusively applied by other writers of the New Testament to these sacred books, such as those of Moses and the prophets, which were believed infallibly to communicate the will of God. If, therefore, omitting all other testimony on the subject, we should confine ourselves wholly to that of St. Peter, I see not but that it might with propriety be said, that the writings of St. Paul had, by an inspired apostle, been pronounced true and sacred.

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In the preceding lecture, we defined inspiration in the following words, "Such an influence on the mind of a person, as either communicates to him something previously unknown, or brings so clearly to his recollection what was once known, as prevents him from conveying to others anything inconsistent with truth." This divine influence was, I suppose, enjoyed by the authors of the New Testament, when writing on the subject of religion. We are not under the necessity of supposing, that when other subjects are incidentally introduced, the same influence is exerted on the mind of the writer. When Paul gives Timothy advice concerning his health, and when he directs the latter to bring certain articles of apparel, which were left behind, or mentions the names of many, whom he wished to receive from him Christian salutations, the occasion was not such as to require any special influence of the divine Spirit. Nor are we authorized to believe, that in every opinion or purpose, which the sacred writers express on subjects, with which religious truth is not immediately connected, they were under any infallible influence. St. Paul sometimes formed purposes the accomplishment of which was providentially prevented; (1 Cor. 15: 5. 2 Cor. 1: 15) neither in forming nor expressing which purposes, can we suppose him to have been under a divine impulse. On common subjects the apostles speak with the same uncertainty, which usually attends human affairs: Besides the household of Stephanus, saith he, I know not whether I baptized any other. (1 Cor. 1: 16.) It may be, saith he to the Corinthians, that I will abide, yea and winter with you. St. Peter says: By Sylvanus, a faithful brother, as I suppose, I have written to you. Similar uncertainty is perceived in the following expressions: I hope to see you in my journey. I will come unto you quickly, if the Lord will. I hope to stay some time with you if the Lord permit. These things I write hoping to come unto you quickly; but if I should tarry, that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the church of God, etc.

The doubtfulness, expressed in these quotations, does, in no

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degree, extend to the doctrines of religion. These are exhibited with the confidence of men, who knew the source whence their knowledge and their commission were derived.

It is of no small importance to ascertain in what light these writings were viewed in the first ages of their existence. That they were greatly respected, read in Christian assemblies, and appealed to both by friends and enemies, as containing the religion of Christ, was shown on a former occasion. It will now be shown, by passages from the Fathers, selected and arranged by Dr. Whitby, that the christian Scriptures were believed to be given by inspiration.

"The apostles," says Clement of Rome, "being filled with the Spirit, and having the word of God committed to them, went out preaching the kingdom of God." He adds, that "St. Paul wrote to them by the Spirit." "In Justin Martyr's time, they were read in christian assemblies, as the holy prophets, as being written by men full of the divine Spirit." Irenaeus asserts, that "the apostles knew of the truth by revelation, as well as St. Paul; for, as St. Paul was an apostle not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, so were they." Theophilus, who lived in the second century, speaks of the ancient prophets, and the writers of the Gospels, as corresponding, because they both spake by the same Spirit. "The prophets and apostles," says Clement of Alexandria, "were both actuated by one and the same Spirit." Origen, it appears, speaks on the subject with great decision and particularity, asserting of the evangelical and apostolical Scriptures, that "they are divinely inspired." Nearly in the words of Theophilus and Clement of Alexandria, he adds, that "both the prophets of the Old, and the writers of the New Testament, spake by one and the same Spirit."

The investigation, you perceive, has related exclusively to the New Testament. Though it is not my intention to institute an inquiry concerning the Jewish Scriptures, it may not be useless to exhibit, in very few words, the general grounds, on which their claims to inspiration are supported.

1. The inspiration of Moses results unavoidably from the

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truth of his religion. Our Saviour spake, but wrote nothing. Moses not only spake, but wrote. His religion is contained in his own writings. All which any one can desire to have proved in regard to him, is, that he was divinely commissioned. But the truth of the Mosaic religion certainly results from the truth of Christianity. That Moses had received a divine commission, is every where acknowledged by Christ and his apostles. Therefore, by proving Christianity, we did, in fact, prove the inspiration of Moses. But the application of the remark may be more extensive. The books which were received as sacred by the Jews, were precisely the same as those which now constitute the Old Testament. This is evident from the testimony of Josephus. These Jewish Scriptures were in general, acknowledged by our Saviour as of divine authority. As such he appealed to them in opposition to his adversaries. St. Paul, also, whose inspiration we have endeavored to show, asserted in reference to these writings, that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God. As to the prophets in particular, the accomplishment of their predictions indicates the source whence they were derived; and it should not be forgotten, that hence arises additional and decisive proof, that Moses was inspired, as he delivered that prophecy, which so minutely delineates the present condition and fortunes of the Jewish people.

We close the lecture with a few remarks.

1. If the Scriptures are the word of God, their value is inexpressibly great. Religion, as it involves the eternal state of human beings, has undeniably pre-eminent claims to our attention. On such a subject, to be left to mere conjecture, or to the discordant theories of fallible and benighted men, would be infinitely to be deplored. To such a condition we are not abandoned. When we contemplate human conduct, or that event, which mortals most dread, but which none can escape, we are not under the necessity of examining what Plato and Cicero have written on the immortality of the soul, or on the offices of life; we have instruction, in which there can be no error. The Son of God hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality

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to light. Men, who had been conversant with him, and were afterwards guided by that Spirit whom he sent to teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, have recorded his words and miracles, and have developed his doctrines. We know, therefore, not only that we shall be judged hereafter, but also the standard by which all decisions as to human character will be made.

2. I would subjoin a few remarks as to the manner in which the Scriptures are to be studied, and the extent, to which reason is of use in forming our theological sentiments. First, reason is of the greatest importance, in examining the evidences of revealed religion, that we may ascertain whether that which professes to be from God, is so in reality. When any person, having examined the Scriptures, perceives that their high claims are well supported, his reason is required in comparing the different parts, one with another, to see what is the meaning of each, and what are the doctrines, which they inculcate. In order to this it may be necessary to consider what is the author's design, and whether his language is literal or figurative. In this point of view, there may also be much importance attached to ancient events, customs, and modes of thinking. That this importance may neither be overlooked nor exaggerated, the exercise of sound judgment is required. But, when the meaning of God's word is ascertained, (and in most cases this may be no difficult matter,) there is an end to all hesitancy, deliberation, and debate. What God has taught cannot be false. The commands which he has given, must be obeyed; and this, whether, in themselves considered, we are able to understand the reasonableness of the command, or to perceive the consistency of the doctrine. The reason is obvious. It is very possible for beings of our limited capacities to err. Many things, which now appear irrational, might appear otherwise, were our knowledge increased, or our powers enlarged. But it is not possible for a God of infinite wisdom to err; nor for a God of infinite truth and justice, to utter a falsehood, or to act unrighteously.

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LECTURE XXVIII.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

As it appears to be universally conceded among the advocates for revelation, that the advent of Jesus Christ had an important relation to the moral condition of man, it should seem, that the ascertaining of this moral condition well deserves our first inquiries.

Our views as to our own characters, ought doubtless to correspond with truth. If guilty but of slight aberration, penitence and self-abasement may rise to a degree, altogether disproportionate to our crimes. And persons ought to abstain from excess, as well in condemning, as in applauding themselves. On the other hand, if our disobedience is general, unyielding, and inveterate, our conviction and humility, it is evident, ought not to be superficial.

Besides, the effects which Christianity ought to produce on the human character, will be very different in the two supposed cases. In the former, all reformation is not superseded; in the latter, nothing will be satisfactory, but a change that is radical and extensive; and whether the change is produced by ourselves, or *ab extra*, the force to be applied, so to speak, must be in the two cases very different.

As all sin is a transgression of law, it is impossible to form any correct estimate of the demerit and the extent of sin in any supposed instance, without having just thoughts as to the extent of what the law requires. By the term law I do not mean the

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Mosaic law, or any particular establishment, human or divine; but that eternal, immutable rule of rectitude, conformity to which the Almighty demands of all his intelligent offspring. This law results necessarily from the nature and relations of things, and not merely from the will of any being whatever; i. e. while things exist, as they are; while there is a God of such attributes; and while He has creatures in such and such conditions, it is impossible, but that certain feelings and actions on the part of these creatures should be suitable, and those which are opposite unsuitable. Under given circumstances, the will of no being can change right into wrong, or wrong into right.

This immutable law, to which the Almighty requires his creatures to conform, takes cognizance, not of overt actions alone, which are only modifications of sound or motion; but regards these, together with the purpose and choice of intelligent creatures. We are not unfrequently led to entertain wrong opinions of the divine law, by our views of civil legislation. If a man offers no injury to the State or to individuals; if he contributes his part to the support of the one, and discharges his debts to the other, he is, in the estimation of civil law, an upright man. The law requires nothing, which he refuses to yield. Whether in discharging his debts, or in supporting or defending the State, he is actuated by a regard to personal convenience and aggrandizement, or by a generous love to public happiness, is a matter concerning which human laws make no inquiry.

Hence, we readily believe it to be no difficult matter to satisfy the demands of God. While our fellow men receive from us little injury, and some benefit; while the name of our Maker is not blasphemed, nor mentioned contemptuously, we scarcely imagine that the justice of God can have any further demands.

In the true spirit of such reasoning, the Pharisee said: "I thank God, I am not as other men are: I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I possess." Under the influence of the same mistake, though perhaps not with an equal degree of pride and self-complacency, the young nobleman, when differ-

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ent parts of the law were brought to his recollection, replied: All these things have I kept from my youth.

Now it is extremely evident, that if there is a fitness in actions, there is prior fitness in disposition and feelings. If it is suitable that I should, by my countenance, tone of voice, words and actions, express gratitude to a friend who has saved my life at the hazard of his own, it is previously suitable that I should feel gratitude. This is, indeed, comprehended in the phraseology; for strictly speaking, I cannot express my gratitude, if I have no gratitude to express. If there is an acknowledged propriety in certain words and actions, relating to Deity and our fellow men, it is because there is a previous propriety in those dispositions, of which these words and actions are the sign. No parent is satisfied with the attention and caresses of a child, if he does not consider them as the sign of an affectionate temper. It is this which causes pleasure to thrill through the heart and glitter in the eyes. Let the professions of a person be what they may, and let his actions, by which you are benefitted, be ever so numerous, your gratitude inevitably ceases, the moment you are ascertained, that his view sare exclusively fixed on his own emolument. The case is not different in regard to our Creator. His law takes cognizance of the tastes, desires, and purposes of men; and a moral corruption is to be estimated by the agreement, which there is between the former and the latter. So far as men pursue those objects which God and reason approve, they are innocent or virtuous. So far as they pursue different ends, they are sinful. It is a maxim, taken from the morals of Aristotle, that many actions, which seem worthy of commendation, lose all their value, when we investigate the principle that produced them.

You will easily perceive, I imagine, that in regard to what has just been mentioned, the divine requirements could not be less than they are. It can hardly be said, after a moment's reflection, that external actions alone ought to be matter of retribution; or that God, as a wise Governor and Judge, ought to suffer to pass unnoticed, the selfishness, pride, revenge, or ma-

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lignity of his creatures, even should these qualities never be exhibited to the view of men. Such a retribution as this, would be perfectly irreconcileable with our best ideas of the Supreme Being. That account which Deity gives of himself, is such, therefore, as to obtain the full approbation of human reason: I the Lord, search the hearts; I try the reins of the children of men, to give to every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

It is next to be inquired, whether the divine law is, in its application, general or particular. Are we bound to subject our feelings to this law on great occasions only, or at every moment of our rational existence? On this question as well as on the preceding, human reason will give a right decision. Where there is a right and a wrong, whether the occasion is more or less important, it is most evident that the right is to be pursued and the wrong rejected. Obliquity is essentially different from rectitude. Whether an offence is small or great, its nature is the same. If, therefore, a small variation were allowed, a great one could not consistently be punished. I should be perfectly confident in appealing to any person of judgment and reflection, whether he could view his Creator with undiminished respect and reverence, were it ascertained, that although the divine law prohibited perverseness of disposition and feeling when carried to a high degree, the same perverseness when existing in a low degree, escaped its cognizance? Is it possible that a perfect God, and a perfect law, should allow any, even the smallest degree of ingratitude, envy, or malignity? Is it possible that such a Being, and such a law, should not condemn every want of the opposite qualities? "All rational creatures," says Dr. Clarke, "whose wills are not constantly and regularly determined, and their actions governed by right reason, and the necessary differences of good and evil, according to the eternal and invariable rules of justice, equity, goodness and truth; but suffer themselves to be swayed by unaccountable, arbitrary humor and rash passions; by lusts, vanity, and pride; by private interest, or present sensual gratification: These, setting up their

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own unreasonable self-will, in opposition to the nature and reason of things, endeavor, as much as in them lies, to make things be what they are not, and cannot be; which is the highest presumption and greatest insolence imaginable; it is acting contrary to that reason and judgment, which God has implanted in their natures, on purpose to enable them to discern the difference between good and evil. It is attempting to destroy the order by which the universe subsists. It is offering the highest imaginable affront to the Creator of all things." (Nat. and Rev. Rel. p. 51.)

No law could be reasonable and consistent, which does not require perfect obedience. On the same ground, on which we are required to abstain from any sin, we are required to abstain from all. Our depravity and guilt are therefore in direct proportion to our moral imperfection.

The justice and propriety of so much strictness in regard to innocent beings, the progenitors of our race, for instance, before their apostacy, will not perhaps be questioned; but is no allowance to be made, you inquire, for creatures, frail as we are at present, and surrounded by temptations? I answer, if strong passions, and what is called frailty, destroy moral agency, and render us incapable of doing either right or wrong, it must be granted that we are not subjects of retribution. But, by the term frailty, the objector would probably mean, either strong temptations, or an inherent propensity to sin. As to the first, if actions are innocent, merely because there are temptations to perform them, it is doubtful whether there is any sin in the world. On this ground, the first transgressors might have pleaded innocence. To comply with temptation is either right, or it is not. Compliance with temptation to do a wrong action, cannot be right; but if such compliance is wrong, it is justly punishable.

If the term frailty is used in the other sense, to signify inherent propensity to evil, such propensity is doubtless criminal, and exposes the transgressor to the displeasure of God. We should not excuse a man guilty of robbery, were he to tell us

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that he had long possessed peculiar fondness for a life of plunder; nor an incendiary, should he plead inveterate malignity.

The truth is, there can be but one law for the good and the bad; and that law must require universal rectitude. "All rational beings," says the writer already quoted, "ought, i. e. are obliged to take care that their wills and actions be constantly determined and governed by the eternal rule of right and equity."

"Perhaps it will be demanded," says Mr. Locke, "why did God give so hard a law to mankind, that, to the apostles' time no one of Adam's issue had kept it?" To which he answers, "It was such a law, as the purity of God's nature required, and must be the law of such a creature as man, unless God would have made him a rational creature, and not required him to have lived by the law of reason, but would have countenanced in him, irregularity and disobedience to that light, which he had, and that rule which was suitable to his nature; which would have been, to have authorized disorder, confusion, and wickedness, in his creatures. For this law was the law of reason, or of nature; and if rational creatures will not live up to the rule of their reason, who shall excuse them? If you will admit them to forsake reason in one point, why not in another? Where will you stop? To disobey God in any part of his commands, (and it is he that commands what reason does,) is direct rebellion, which if dispensed with in any point, government and order are at an end, and there can be no bounds set to the lawless exorbitancy of unconfined men. The law, therefore, was as St. Paul tells us, holy, just, and good, and such that it could not, and ought not to be otherwise."

Perhaps it may still be necessary to make some observations on the criminality of negative qualities. It is implied in some of the preceding remarks, that the law condemns not only dispositions which are positively wrong, such as hatred, cruelty, etc., but likewise the want of benevolence and compassion. If this should be apprehended, at first, to be unjust or improper,

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the error will be corrected by a little attention to Scripture, and to what passes in common life. A certain man, our Saviour tells us, as he journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment and left him wounded. A priest and a Levite came in sight of the sufferer, and passed by without relieving him. But why is this circumstance mentioned? Was it to their praise or dishonor? To the latter no doubt. They were criminal. But for what? Not for doing any positive injury to the unfortunate man; but for omitting to give him relief. No one will doubt that they were criminal, and justly liable to punishment for the want of that benevolence which they ought to have felt.

In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, Christ has briefly described the process of the last judgment; and exhibited the charges, on which those on his left hand will be condemned. These charges, it is remarkable, relate not to positive offences, but to the neglect of duty. I was hungry and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.

We are not to conclude from this passage of Scripture, that negative qualities, or the want of right dispositions and actions will be the exclusive ground of condemnation; but surely, unless these were to be taken into the account, such a representation as that which has been cited, would not have been made. Nor is the sentiment here conveyed, discordant with opinions, most commonly received. Should a person know that an incendiary designed to fire a town, on such a night, and yet give no information to the inhabitants, the public opinion would scarcely be less unfavorable concerning him, than concerning the incendiary himself. He, who conceals a plot against the State, is punished by human laws, for misprision of treason.

Let it not be considered, therefore, as arbitrary or severe, that the divine law condemns defects, as well as positive offences. We could scarcely find a person who would deliberately

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deny the criminality of being indifferent to God, and the happiness of his creatures. It has now been shown, I conceive, that every action of man, that every intention and desire, and that every defect in devotion, gratitude, kindness and purity, is just matter of punishment. If it is not so, the contrary may be shown; but if it is so, to complain of the extent and preciseness of divine requisitions, will be worse than useless. If reason approves the divine law, it is unreasonable to complain.

The way is now prepared to make some direct inquiries, as to the human character. If the law has been correctly stated, nothing remains, but to apply it to human feelings and actions.

That there is universally prevailing some degree of departure from this law; that there neither is, nor has been any person on earth, living to years of discernment, by whom the reasonable requirements of God have not been violated, in a degree, greater or less, is what may, without any impropriety, be taken for granted. For, although we sometimes hear persons mentioned as perfectly innocent, and perfectly pure, the language is evidently the result either of passion or levity; and the person using it, when called upon, will hardly essay to make any defence. It is evidently true, then, as the Scriptures declare, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Therefore, whatever be the penalties of the divine law, all are exposed to them.

If there is any difficulty in admitting this conclusion, you will consider, that to the determination of the general question of a man's innocence or guilt, it is not necessary to ascertain the degree to which he has violated the law. That may be necessary to a right apportioning of punishment, but not to a decision, that punishment is due. If I have walked uprightly in ninety-nine instances, and perversely in one, it is as true that the law is broken, as if the instances of perverseness were more numerous, though the merited punishment is less. There are in our civil code, laws against murder, robbery, theft, and forgery. Should a man be indicted for the last crime, and brought to trial, it would avail nothing to plead that the crime had been

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committed but once. Nothing more than that is contained in the indictment. It does not set forth, that the crime has been repeated. Nor does the law declare, that forgery is no crime, unless repeated. One act of the kind renders a man liable to condemnation. So, if a person commit robbery on the highway, it will avail nothing to plead that he has suffered a hundred persons to pass without injury.

It being conceded, that all have sinned in some instances, let those instances be ever so few, it is no less certain that all are justly condemned; it being always understood, that punishment following condemnation, will be proportionate to the degree of guilt.

Let us now inquire, whether the quantity of human guilt be small.

Perhaps there is no crime, which finds fewer advocates than ingratitude. Persons accused of this may deny the charge, but they never attempt to justify the disposition. They never say, that there is no obliquity and demerit in being unmindful of benefits. If a moral fitness is discernible on any occasion, it is so on an occasion of favors bestowed and received. In proportion to these favors is the degree of merit attached to ingratitude. Agreeably to this, is the sentence so often quoted from Publius Syrus: Omne dixeris maledictum, quum ingratum hominem dixeris.

With what feelings do we receive and enjoy favors bestowed by our Creator? Our dependence on him is absolute and universal. Existence is not more truly his gift, than are all those objects which render existence valuable. To his munificence are we indebted for intellectual powers, and the means of their cultivation—for the sustenance daily provided;—for the enjoyments derived from the active and varying scenes of the day, and from the rest and tranquillity of the night. His gift are the relations and friends whom we love, and from whose affection to us, so considerable a part of the joy of life is derived. His are the showers, which moisten, and the sun which warms the earth. From Him are the pleasure and animation of spring,

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and the riches of harvest—all, that satisfies the appetite, supports or restores the animal system, gratifies the ear, or charms the eye. With what emotions, let it be asked, are all these objects viewed, and these blessings enjoyed? Is it the habit of man to acknowledge God in his works, and to attribute all the pleasures and security of life to the Creator's munificence? Possession and prosperity are enjoyed, not as a gift to the undeserving, but as the result of chance or good fortune, or as the merited reward of our own prudence and effort. Were gratitude a trait in the human character, it would be proportionate to obligation: and where much is received, much would be acknowledged. In this case, the liveliest sense of obligation would be exhibited among the wealthy, and those whose prosperity had been long and uninterrupted. But do facts correspond with this supposition? Are God, his providence and bounty, most sensibly and devoutly acknowledged by you, who feel no want, and are tried with no adversity? The truth is, our sense of obligation usually diminishes in proportion to the greatness and duration of blessings bestowed. A long course of prosperity renders us the more insensible and irreligious.

But, on no subject is human ingratitude so remarkably apparent, as in regard to the christian religion. I speak not of those who reject, but of those who believe Christianity; and who of course believe that God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish. Search all the records of every era and nation; look through the works of God, so far as they are open to human inspection, and you find nothing which equally displays the riches of divine mercy. The Son of God died to save culprits from merited condemnation. But is this subject contemplated with interest, with joy, with astonishment? It is viewed with the most frigid indifference, or heart-felt reluctance. The human mind, far from considering this, as a favorite subject, flies from it, when occasionally presented.

What inference are we to make from this circumstance? What conclusion is that, to which reason impels us? for we ask

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no gratuitous concessions. We ask you to entertain no opinions in theology but such as are supported, and such as, all things considered, it would be irrational to deny. Ingratitude is universally allowed to imply baseness,—moral corruption. Ingratitude towards God cannot, in its nature, be less criminal than ingratitude to men. Our ingratitude towards our Maker is undeniably clear, and astonishingly great. We are, therefore, chargeable with a high degree of baseness and ill desert.

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LECTURE XXIX.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

So far as moral corruption is evinced by ingratitude, flagrant and long continued, the existence of such corruption in our species has been shown. The conclusion rests on this ground: 1. That ingratitude is a crime; and, 2. That men are ungrateful to the Supreme Being. If neither of these propositions is questionable, the conclusion is not to be resisted. If the want of grateful feelings is highly criminal, if it betrays peculiar baseness of temper; and if, at the same time, great munificence is exercised on the part of Deity, the amount of human demerit is not inconsiderable.

We will now attend to another argument. As in the material world the nature of different substances is known by their affinities; so by its objects of affection and aversion, we ascertain moral character. Let it be known, with persons of what character a man is most fond of associating, and you find no difficulty in determining his own. Attachment to profligate characters indicates profligacy. Attachment to the virtuous and upright, indicates purity of mind. Should there be in any town or village a person of unusual suavity of temper, benevolence of design, and universal correctness of behavior; whose knowledge and discernment always selected the most suitable seasons and objects for the exercise of his benevolence, would it not follow, that his neighbors were extremely deficient in taste and good feelings, if they were not disposed to seek his society, and to consult his judgment? Would difference as to his moral

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character leave us in any doubt as to theirs? The conclusion would be more obvious still, if the person contemplated were known to be easy of access, conciliatory in his manners, and habituated to express his mind in terms, which, all things considered, were most appropriate. Now, there is present with every person, a being, whose character is similar to that described, but in degree, infinitely superior. There is a being, whose knowledge of every subject is perfect, and whose decisions are infallible; a being, who interests himself in our situation, and is disposed to impart counsel, and communicate relief; whose benevolence is greater than human language can describe, or human intellects conceive. He has never refused a favor, when goodness and wisdom required its bestowment; and far from being inaccessible, he has invited mankind to express to him their situation and desires.

Now, if it can be shown, either that mankind have no love for this divine being, or that they love him in a very low degree, it will follow that they have a perverse or depraved taste. That He, in whose character are united the most glorious attributes in the highest possible degree, should not be an object of affection and veneration to creatures of correct moral feelings, is a supposition perfectly absurd.

Could it be proved, that our race in general, though not entirely destitute of love to God, possess this quality but in a low degree; a degree altogether disproportionate to their ability of comprehending his perfections; the existence of moral corruption would be no less certain, though its amount would be smaller.

But how, you inquire, does it appear, that there is in mankind generally, this deficiency of love to their Maker? I answer, that this is evident by their not exhibiting those marks of the contrary, which they certainly would exhibit if such deficiency did not exist.

1. From the condition of man, his imbecility, his dependence and want of knowledge, it would be obviously the dictate of reason, to maintain constant and devout intercourse with his

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Maker. Our situation clearly indicates the propriety of such intercourse; and previously to observation, it would be thought, that the liberty of resorting to the Almighty, would be contemplated with the highest joy, and improved as the richest privilege. How little such an opinion corresponds with fact, you need not be informed. Though we cannot live insensible of our wants, feebleness, and mortality, there is no prevailing disposition in the human heart to place confidence in God. Men do not love to view themselves, as surrounded by their Creator's presence. They do not rejoice at the return of seasons devoted to prayer. Nay, it is the general character of men to cast off fear, and to restrain prayer before God. If the fear either of temporal or eternal sufferings, occasionally urges them to this exercise, it is evidently not in itself agreeable to their dispositions. It is a service, submitted to,—rather endured than relished. If this is doubted, let us reflect on what passes in our own hearts; let us observe the general appearance of want of devotion among others; and in many, the entire neglect of religious acknowledgement.

2. Did we entertain right feelings towards God, a love, proportionate to our powers of comprehending his moral character; such feelings would be manifested by the frequency and the manner of our conversation on the subject. We are universally fond of conversing concerning those whom we love; nor is there any difficulty in discovering our sentiments, by the interest which we take, when their characters are discussed. Were it inquired, whether an intimate and warm friendship subsisted between a particular person and yourself, any one would justly think himself authorized to answer in the negative, if, after much acquaintance, he had observed, that you were not in the habit of mentioning the name of this person; or if you discovered no interest, whenever such mention was made by others. If there are circumstances, in which this conclusion would be incorrect, they are such as do not exist in regard to Deity.

Now, of the great variety of subjects, which occur in social intercourse, do the attributes, providence, and requirements of

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God, hold a conspicuous place? If conversation of this kind is commenced, is it maintained with a general and lively interest? and do the countenances of those present evince their delight in the occurrence of such a theme? The experiment is indeed but sparingly made; but when it is, there is great uniformity in the result. Now on what principle can we account for this fact? Will it be said, that we are afraid of desecrating things sacred? and that reluctance to speak of our Maker, really proceeds from the high venertion in which He is held? How happens it then, that those who on all occasions, manifest most tenderness of conscience, and devout regard for the divine honor, should be less delicate in this particular instance, than others, whose usual deportment is that of indifference, or irreligion? How happens it, that all the reverence for Deity should, in this instance, be on the side of those, who evince it in no other? For though it is unquestionably true that hypocrites or fanatics may ostentatiously speak of religion, and equally true that some pious persons may be less able or disposed, than some others of the same character, to introduce or support religious conversation; it will not be denied, that discourse of this kind is, in general, most acceptable to persons of piety; and least so to those of an opposite character.

In relation to many subjects, it may be said, that they cannot be universally acceptable, on account of the different habits, studies, and capacities of those present. That which is interesting to a student, may not be so to a man in commercial, or military life. But the character and commands of God are of equal concern to all human beings. With these are connected the immortal interests of men.

Now, if indifference to that discourse, of which our Creator is the subject, or even aversion from it, betrays a want of affection for his character; the same indifference, or aversion, under our peculiar circumstances, so interested as we are in this subject, so dependent on God for present and future happiness, affords proof of the same melancholy fact, still more strong, and as it would seem, irresistible.

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For reasons, already stated, the human mind ought to receive its highest pleasures from divine contemplation. To intelligent creatures of correct moral feelings, Deity is, of all objects, the most amiable, splendid, and majestic. Reason dictates, that our attention to objects, should be in proportion to their magnitude, and that our love should be proportionate to their moral excellence. Observation and experience show, that the mind recurs to objects, in proportion to the love which it entertains for them. Let it then be inquired whether Deity is generally an object of joyful and frequent contemplation. Is it a trait in the character of mankind that they receive the highest pleasure in viewing the independence, omnipresence, power, purity, and happiness of God their Creator? On a favorite subject, there is no difficulty in fixing the attention; the difficulty is rather in abstracting our thoughts from it. In the present case it will not be denied, I apprehend, that all the difficulty is of the former kind.

Another argument to prove the want of love to the Supreme being, may be deduced from our disregard to his honor and felicity.

It may appear, perhaps, at first view, that considering the independence and majesty of God, we may well be excused from any solicitude on this subject. It is true indeed, that the happiness of God is immutable, and he will secure his own honor; but this does not render it suitable for his creatures to be indifferent to either. If you are cordially attached to the character and interests of a personage, ever so elevated, you do not witness, without emotion, contempt for his opinions and commands, or obloquy attached to his name. As to the felicity of God, it must be a matter of joy to the upright in heart. We are never indifferent to the happiness of those for whom we entertain affection. If, therefore, we find no consolation in the thought, that the most perfect being in the universe, is completely and permanently happy, it follows, either that we are criminally deficient in love to God, or perfectly destitute of that quality.

It being inferred, that there is in mankind a great deficiency

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of love to God, by their not exhibiting those marks which always accompany such love, it cannot be denied that men are extensively and deeply depraved. For if perversion of taste, if obliquity of character is not proved by disinclination to an employment, the most rational and advantageous, such as that of addressing the Supreme Being, and by indifference to the most perfect character in the universe, it will not, I think, be easy to define moral depravity, nor even to imagine facts or circumstances, by which its existence might be shown. If this argument proves any degree of moral disorder, it proves, that such disorder must be extremely great; for there is amazing defect of character—there is baseness, in viewing, either with disgust or indifference, the most splendid and perfect assemblage of moral attributes.

Let us now inquire, what testimony, as to the morality of the human character, is borne by events, usually occurring, in a country of civilization and religious knowledge. I do not ask for any evidence of perfection, or innocence. Claims of this kind will hardly be urged in behalf either of ourselves or others; but I ask, whether there is not evidence of strong, inveterate propensity to evil? That men show the want of right feelings towards their Maker, is comparatively little. They manifest open contempt for their Creator by violating his commands.

I need not here mention those innumerable acts of dishonesty and perfidy which all civil restraints, in addition to moral motives, are unable to prevent. I need not mention that intemperance and sensuality, which are as certainly pernicious to sound intellects, to character, and present interest, as they are to the eternal salvation of their votaries. I need not remind you of the facility, with which both the young and the old acquire habits of blaspheming the divine name, and of mingling, in vulgar intercourse, language the most trifling and the most tremendous. It is impossible, while the present subject is in hand, that considerations of this kind should not spontaneously present themselves. But in addition to this, we cannot avoid the general conclusion, that one object concentrates human anxiety

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and effort, viz. the present world. Associate with persons of every age and of various ranks; hear the conversation of the indolent and the active; the illustrious and the obscure; the hardy, unlettered laborer, who subdues the wilderness, and the votaries of refinement and science; carry with you in the excursion as much charity and candor, as may consist with sound judgment; and then return, if possible, with this conclusion, that the object of man is, at once the most rational and honorable, viz. to resemble his Creator, and to secure salvation; or rather avoid, if possible, the opposite conclusion, that man has forgotten his origin and high destiny, and is absorbed in self and present existence.

There is a youth, let it be supposed, who is heir to an extensive empire; into the possession and government of which he is to enter, if qualified, at the age of twenty. With this prospect before him, and with the best means of improvement, he cannot be induced to prosecute those studies, and acquire those habits and qualifications, which are necessary to his future station. He cannot be made to look with interest on the empire, which he is to govern; but is invincibly averse from that kind of education, which is indispensable to a person of his distinguished rank. In the mean time, he is absorbed in pursuits the most trifling, sottish and ignoble. If all efforts, long continued, were insufficient to raise his mind, and give a new direction to his pursuits, no one would hesitate to conclude, that there was in him a radical defect, a baseness of spirit. If a thousand, or a million youth, could be supposed in similar circumstances, manifesting the same disposition, the like conclusion would be formed in regard to them all.

But if the general appearance of things, in a civilized and christian country is such as forces us to conclude, that human attention and efforts are centered on that part of existence, which is now present, while the eternity of a future life and retribution is universally believed, must we not conclude, with equal certainty, that there is in man a strange obliquity, a strong indisposition to the cultivation of those habits, which are essen-

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tial to future happiness and glory? As these habits are those of moral rectitude, the conclusion is, that moral rectitude is that, to which man is strongly disinclined.

That this argument may be more distinctly considered, we will enumerate some of the restraints, in opposition to which crimes are committed; viz. the restraints of parents and guardians, the restraints of civil authority, and those of religion.

1. The restraints of parents and guardians. I am not speaking of infancy, or of an age, so little removed from it, as to preclude the free use of intellectual powers. It is generally allowed, in the case supposed, that authority is under the influence of affection and good design. Youth themselves, will, in few instances, deliberately deny, that the restraints, which parental authority imposes, are intended to promote their permanent advantage. Why then should numberless arts be resorted to, with design, that these restraints may be evaded? Why should the child cherish any desires to counteract a government, which has for its object, his own felicity? What a monstrous victory is that, which is gained over the efforts of parental wisdom, guided by unremitting good will and tenderness? What language would this be in the mouth of a son: "I know that my parents love me cordially, and are continually anxious for my reputation, virtue, and happiness; but they shall not be gratified. I have the pleasure of reflecting, that my efforts to render their designs abortive have been crowned with no inconsiderable success!" O! tis the triumph of the maniac, who slips the halter to his neck, and strangles himself in spite of his keepers!

2. Let us next consider, against what restraints of a civil nature crimes are committed. Civil government itself is little more than an institution for preventing mankind from doing injury to others and themselves. The whole criminal code, and a great part of civil restrictions, have their origin in the corruption of man. But for this, their necessity and use would be superseded. It would not be easy to enumerate the expedients, to which legislators have resorted, nor the various penalties, by

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which their laws have been sanctioned. I need not mention public infamy, disfranchisement, bodily mutilation, pillories, posts, imprisonment, the axe, the gallows, and the gibbet. Yet this whole ghastly assemblage of terrors is inadequate to the suppression of crimes. Thefts, forgeries, violations of contracts the most sacred, robberies, and assassinations are not exterminated.

Now, must not the disposition to evil be inveterate and violent, if it operate in defiance of all these obstacles? But though the restraints already enumerated, cannot be considered but as strong dissuasives from vice, and though we cannot but consider their inefficacy, as proving a very high degree of moral depravity, there are other restraints, the neglect of which affords evidence, still more clear and convincing. I mean the restraints of religion.

Extremely pertinent to the present purpose are the words of Mr. Locke, which I am not deterred from using by the consideration of their having been quoted by a writer on this subject. "Were the will determined by the views of good, as it appears in contemplation, greater or less to the understanding, it could never get loose from the infinite, eternal joys of heaven, once proposed and considered as possible; the eternal condition of a future state infinitely outweighing the expectation of riches and honor, or any other worldly pleasure, which we can propose to ourselves; though we should grant these the more probable to be obtained. He that will not be so far a rational creature, as to reflect seriously on infinite happiness and misery, must needs condemn himself, as not making that use of his understanding which he should. The rewards and punishments of another life, which the Almighty has established, as the enforcements of his laws, are of weight enough to determine the choice against whatever of pleasure or pain this life can show. When the eternal state is considered, but in its bare possibility, which nobody can make doubt of, he that will allow exquisite and endless happiness to be but the possible consequence of a good life here, and the contrary state the possible reward of a bad one, must

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own himself to judge very much amiss, if he does not conclude that a virtuous life, with the certain expectation of everlasting bliss, which may come, is to be preferred to a vicious one, with the fear of that dreadful state of misery, which, it is very possible, may overtake the guilty, or at least, the terrible, uncertain hope of annihilation. This is so evidently so, that though the virtuous life here had nothing but pain, and the vicious continued pleasure, which yet, for the most part, is quite otherwise, and wicked men have not much the odds to boast of, even in their present possession; nay, all things rightly considered, have, I think, even the worst part here; but, when infinite happiness is put in one scale, against infinite misery in the other; if the worst, that comes to the pious man, if he mistakes, be the best, which the wicked man cannot attain to, if he be right, who can, without madness, run the venture? who, in his wits, would choose to come within the possibility of infinite misery? which, if he miss, there is still nothing to be got by the hazard. Whereas, on the other side, the sober man ventures nothing against infinite happiness to be got, if his expectation comes to pass."

Thus, does this profound reasoner show the extreme irrationality of neglecting religion, even though there were but a bare possibility of its truth. The case will be incomparably stronger, if we consider, that what is here supposed only possible, is generally believed in Christian countries; I mean, that future rewards and punishments are interminable. All the infringements of moral rectitude, all the neglect of moral obligation, which occur in Christian countries, take place in contempt of endless sufferings, and of endless pleasures. These are the restraints, against which crimes are perpetrated. Besides, it is a fact, perfectly beyond contradiction, that most persons, under the circumstances supposed, in full belief of eternal retributions, have either never felt sufficient anxiety to institute an investigation of their own moral characters, or else maintain an irreligious life, without even doubting their exposure to endless punishment.

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Here, I would ask again, whether religion, which is only agreement with the dictates of sound reason, must not be an object of our fixed aversion, if, under such circumstances, in opposition to such motives, we perseveringly reject it? How is it possible to account for facts undeniable and without number, unless we suppose a very strong propensity to evil?

It will be replied, perhaps, that though the motives to a religious life, are indeed extremely forcible, they do not come into contact with the mind. Considerations of a religious nature are forgotten among innumerable objects of sense.

I answer, that the superiority of weight in religious motives, infinitely overbalances any advantage, which other motives may have merely on the score of proximity. Besides, how distant is that change in our existence, which brings us to the commencement of a retribution? In truth, the ground is perpetually opening for some new deposit. Mortality is common; and the transition of not a few, is instantaneous. By these providences, by the most urgent solicitations of inspired eloquence, and by the commanding remonstrances of Deity himself, the motives of religion are brought into contact with the mind; and it can scarcely be conceived, that they should be presented under circumstances, more favorable to their influence.

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LECTURE XXX.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

It will probably not be denied, that the arguments already used, prove no inconsiderable degree of depravity in those to whom they apply. But whatever moral disorder exists among ourselves, or among those who are best known to us, we are not hence to conclude, that all men are equally criminal. The present state of our country does not indicate the present moral character of other nations; much less does it indicate their morality in past ages.

To these remarks I offer no objection. On the other hand, those who make them will not deny, that if the moral character of other countries and other ages be found as bad, or worse than our own, whatever legitimate conclusions have already been drawn, may be fairly extended to the species in general.

A very high degree of moral corruption has been proved by our flagrant ingratitude to the Most High; by our indisposition to hold communion with him in exercises of devotion; by our reluctance to contemplate his perfections and relation to us; by the infrequency of religious conversation; by the little interest and pleasure which it excites; by the universal, and almost exclusive attention, bestowed on present existence; and by the maintenance of a vicious life in opposition to motives of eternal consequence.

Do not all these facts exist in those nations, whose moral ad-

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vantages resemble our own? Is not the course of life among them essentially the same as among ourselves? Is there not the same inconsistency between those principles, to which their intellects assent, and those which their hearts embrace?

This will probably not be denied. But as there are few nations whose moral advantages equal ours, there are few whose external conduct and appearance, though not better, would prove the same degree of demerit, or moral baseness. Therefore, our conclusion, as it respects ourselves, and the few nations equally enlightened, would be too severe in regard to others. In answer to this it is not to be said, that those countries in which Christianity has been mutilated and deformed, exhibit, not only all the stupidity and vices of our own, but much in addition. We surely should not resort, either to the Greek or Romish communion, to obtain proof of human uprightness. Would such proof be obtained by searching among those nations which have not received Christianity? Will an examination of the moral state of Mohammedans, Hindoos, or nations more barbarous, lead us to entertain an opinion less unfavorable to the human character, than that to which we should be led, by taking into view our own country alone? If not, it remains only, that we inquire whether, by some untoward circumstance, the present generation does not exhibit a degree of depravity, unknown in the general history of man. For if it can be shown that the world in all previous ages, has been in a state approximating to moral purity, we could, by no means, be justified in predicating deep corruption of our species in general.

But, in fact, one of the first ideas presented to the mind in reading history, is the identity of the human character. In climate, forms of government, degrees of light, and modes of living, there is great diversity; but the grand outlines of character remain unaltered. Whether we judge of an Egyptian, a Persian, a Greek, or Italian, it is not necessary to adopt new principles. They have all the same propensities, and the same general object, Amidst similar temptations, there is similarity

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of conduct. Pride, ambition, lust, revenge, and selfishness, are their most obvious and prominent qualities.

Let us now be more particular.

1. The human character has appeared to equal disadvantage, among barbarous and civilized nations.

It is easy to praise the simplicity and innocence of uncultivated clans and communities. "If we were to judge of the Scythians," says a modern historian, "by the pictures drawn by Horace and Juvenal, their virtues and morals are worthy to be held forth, as examples to mankind. But if, as Herodotus says, their daughters could not be married until they had killed a man with their own hands; if they took pleasure in drinking out of the skulls of those whose blood they had shed; without mentioning the human victims which they offered up to the gods, they were certainly more worthy of detestation than esteem." This conclusion would perhaps have been more striking, had it been drawn from what Herodotus further says as to the habits of these barbarians. "Their military customs are these: every Scythian drinks the blood of the first person he slays. They suspend the skins of their enemies from the bridles of their horses; when they both use them as a napkin, and are proud of them as a trophy. This savage use of the sculls of enemies, regards not only those exclusively, who are of different clans or nations. They do the same with respect to their nearest connexions, if any dissensions have arisen, and they overcome them in combat before the king." Herod. 4. 64. et seq.

From the following extract it will appear, that those tribes which were settled in the north of Europe, retained the ferocity of their Scythian origin. "The Normans sacrificed human victims to a deity, whose rewards were believed to be reserved for those who slew the greatest number in battle; the happiness to which they aspired, was to intoxicate themselves in his hall. The sculls of their slain enemies were the precious cups, which were to be used in their eternal carousals." Millot. Vol. 3. 154.

The resemblance between the ancient Scythians and the

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American natives, has often, and with good reason, been remarked. Among both, we notice the same horrible ferocity.

In treating the present subject, we are under the necessity of referring to some facts which were formerly mentioned, in showing the necessity of divine revelation. "Among the Mexicans human sacrifices were deemed most acceptable, and every captive taken in war, was cruelly tortured and sacrificed. The heart and head were the portion of the gods; while the body was resigned to the captor, who, with his friends, feasted upon it."

The latest accounts of the Islanders in the South Sea, give us most unfavorable ideas of the moral character. The custom of offering human victims is common. Nor will the mind, disgusted with this view of barbarian depravity, obtain any relief by resorting to the Islands of Asia. The inhabitants of the vast Island, or rather continent of New Holland, are in the most deplorable state of ignorance and vice. In some of their ceremonies, the very form and character of man seems despised, and the superiority of brutes acknowledged. The New Zealanders treat their captives as did the Mexicans, i. e. they devour them. Surely it is not among savage nations, that we are to look for proofs of innocence, or facts which will enfeeble the conclusion formerly drawn, as to the human character, from appearances exhibited in our own country.

As little should we be under the necessity of altering our former conclusion, were we to consider what the state of morals has been, at those periods which are most distinguished for civilization, refinement, and literature. When Pericles was increasing the taste and refinement of the Athenians, he was corrupting their morals. As to Roman morality at that era in their history, which produced some of the most extraordinary efforts of the human mind, we have full satisfaction from the testimony of those who were eye witnesses. On this subject, poets and historians perfectly coincide. It is really no easy matter, even for a person not ignorant of the vices prevailing in our own country, to conceive that astonishing variety of appearance which Roman depravity assumed. Whatever of selfishness, cruelty,

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revenge, prodigality, gluttony, and lust, the boldest imagination is able to conceive, was practised among that people, whose power gave law to all nations, and whose literary productions still excite the admiration of all.

It is evident then, that neither the simplicity of savage life, nor the highest literary cultivation, is sufficient to prevent communities of human beings from plunging into the grossest pollution.

2. The character of man appears to have been extremely vicious under various degrees of religious light. What little knowledge we have of the first ages of the world, is obtained from the sacred Scriptures. We may consider the patriarchal age, as extending from the creation, to the time when the Israelites emigrated from Egypt. During this period there was no standing revelation. Divine interpositions were, however, occasionally made; and that light which was conveyed to individuals, must, in a greater or less degree, have been diffused.

In the family of Adam was committed a murder, most unnatural and impious. A brother slew a brother, because the latter had received testimony of the divine approbation; or, in the words of St. John: Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. This individual act of violence does indeed prove nothing with certainty, except the character of its author. But that a crime so atrocious, should have been committed at so early a period, when but a few individuals existed, and when there was almost no possibility of being injured by example, is a fact which well deserves our consideration, while making inquiries as to the character of man.

The next prominent fact which arrests our attention, in reading the early history of our race, is more clearly to our present purpose. When about sixteen centuries had expired, the vices of men became so enormous and general, as to call for exemplary punishment. The universality of the evil, merits particular notice. It was not a few individuals, who rendered themselves conspicuous by daring offences. Corruption pervaded the whole mass: God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the

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earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually. For all flesh had corrupted his way. The Lord said to Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me, for the whole earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth. The divine forbearance was exhausted, and the deluge ended the probation of these incorrigible sinners.

Our own judgment of the character and actions of men may be erroneous. We cannot be assured, that in any instance, it perfectly coincides with truth. On any given occasion, persons may have some feelings, either better or worse, than their actions express. But in the case before us, we have the judgment of God himself. It was he who pronounced the sentence; it was he who inflicted the punishment.

When Noah and his family left the ark, there was a kind of new creation. The race had originated from one pair, and had become intolerably corrupt. They were now to commence another trial. In addition to the smallness of their numbers, the circumstances under which their new probation commenced, were favorable to religion. They had witnessed the general destruction which impiety and profligate manners had brought upon the world; and if God had sent the flood for the express purpose of punishing and destroying a rapacious, sensual, ungodly race; and saved Noah exclusively on this ground, that he had been righteous in his generation; if such discrimination were, in this world, made between the righteous and the wicked, it was easy to infer, that there would be a difference in the world to come.

The influence of this consideration, it appears, was not universal even in his own family.

After the lapse of a few ages, idolatry, and its usual attendant, profligate manners, became so general, that to secure even the existence of true religion among men, further extraordinary efforts on the part of Deity were indispensable. Accordingly, Abraham was selected to be the father of a distinct nation.

During his pilgrimage, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were so polluted with crimes, as to induce the Almighty to

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consume them with fire from heaven. Ten righteous persons would have saved the city, but even that small number could not be found. We might make the same reflection, as to the moral tendency and the effect of this event, which was made in relation to the more general destruction of mankind by the deluge. Unless the infernal prison were opened to human sight, it is not possible to imagine a more vivid display of the wrath of Heaven; nor an event more calculated to rouse a world, slumbering in vice. The catastrophe does not appear, however, to have been followed by any reformation, or even extensive alarm. The inhabitants of Canaan were, at that time, replenishing the measure of their guilt, and preparing for that general extermination, which was to be effected in a subsequent age, by God himself, through the instrumentality of his people Israel.

From the emigration of Israel from Egypt, a new era commences in religious history. The obvious design of Deity was, to procure an asylum for truth and virtue, expelled as they were, from the world in general. The unity of the Godhead, and the purity of the divine character, were accordingly inculcated with great frequency; and in language strong and perspicuous. The law was given under circumstances extremely terrifying: The Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount; and Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended, as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

The terror occasioned by this scene had scarcely subsided; and Moses had not yet descended from the mountain where he conversed with the Almighty, when this same people openly revolted from God, requesting Aaron to form an idol, under whose protection they might return to Egypt. During the forty years of their journeyings in the desert, their disobedience, murmurings, and impiety brought upon them numerous judgments.

Of that vast multitude, which were numbered on their leaving Egypt, but two persons were permitted to enter Canaan. The rest died in the wilderness, agreeably to a divine threatening, previously denounced. To a right estimate of their guilt, it

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is necessary to consider, that a series of miracles had been wrought for their emancipation; that their existence had depended on miraculous supplies; and that the symbol of Jehovah guided their marches.

Nor was their character materially altered, after their establishment in Canaan. Whether their government was administered by judges or kings, the same propensities might be discovered. They were immoral in their lives; impatient of those restraints, which Deity had imposed; and ready, on all occasions, to adopt the idolatrous worship of adjoining nations. It availed nothing, that prophets were commissioned to expostulate, and to denounce impending judgments. Israel would not return to their God. They were swept from the land of their fathers, and transferred to Assyria. The two remaining tribes, unreclaimed by this event, were reserved for similar punishment. Their captivity in Babylon destroyed, indeed, their attachment to idolatry; but the national morals were not improved. It is unnecessary to remind you particularly of the state of the Jews, when our Saviour appeared. He whose decisions are infallible, painted their vices in the darkest colors; and their existence, political and ecclesiastical, was soon after terminated by the Roman armies. No doubt, there had been upright and religious persons in every period of the Jewish economy, as there were in the patriarchal age, individuals of this character. But, if we judge of man, i. e. of the human species, by his appearance under both these dispensations, it is impossible to avoid a conclusion the most unfavorable.

But we have an opportunity of viewing man in the enjoyment of higher advantages, than those, either of patriarchs or Jews. When the latter dispensation gave place to Christianity, the light of the moon became as the light of the sun; and the light of the sun sevenfold, as the light of seven days. During the age of the apostles, and immediately after, the triumphs of Christianity were rapid and extensive. The good effects, which this religion produced on the lives of those, who embraced it, were too obvious to be denied. Christians were distinguished from

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others by meekness, benevolence, probity, and a spiritual life. But this bright morning was succeeded by a day of clouds, darkness, and tempest. The Christian church, so pure and patient, during the ages of persecution, degenerated in the season of its tranquillity. Ignorance, bigotry, intolerance, cruelty, avarice, ambition, and enormous profligacy, were openly exhibited among the professed followers of him, who was meek and lowly in heart, who declared, that his kingdom was not of this world; and whose object was to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Not only were abandoned that converse with heaven, that contempt of the world, and that elevated morality, which had been so conspicuous in the lives of primitive saints; but even all decency, all regard to appearances, were set at defiance: and that not in one country, and one disastrous period only, but generally, and during many centuries. Since the reformation, there has doubtless been more piety in the church, than before that period. But, as some reflections have already been made on the present moral state of the christian world, it will be unnecessary to proceed further in this place. It has now been made evident, I conceive, that mankind, whether we view them in a civilized or barbarous state; whether in the enjoyment of patriarchal, Jewish, or christian light, manifest great uniformity of moral character;—a strong, inveterate attachment to vice.

3. As a distinct argument in proof of human depravity, I mention an acknowledged tendency to alter for the worse. In addition to many proofs of such tendency, which might be obtained by a recurrence to the preceding remarks, I mention; that corruption, whether in political, literary, or religious institutions, is generally allowed to be proportionate to their age. Old and corrupt, in application to government, are terms almost synonymous. Of the religious orders, which have, in different periods, been instituted, many, it is well known, adopted the most austere manners. This austerity usually gave place, by degrees, to indolence, fraud, and dissipation. A person, forming strict laws for a new community, might, with good reason,

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hope to see them well observed, when first adopted; but he would have no doubt, that subsequent ages would be attended by relaxation. If little restraint were imposed by the laws; and considerable disorders were tolerated at the commencement, no rational person would expect the evil to correct itself. Such an issue would not be agreeable to the natural course of events. Whereas, the contrary, viz. a deterioration in the habits and morals of a community, at first well organized and governed, is a change at which no one would be surprised.

4. The moral feelings of mankind are indicated by the character, which pagan nations have attributed to their deities. This character is forcibly, and with great exactness exhibited in the following lines:

> "Gods, partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
> Whose attributes were rage, revenge, and lust."

In what way can we account for the general prevalence of ideas, so unworthy of God, and so inconsistent with reason? When a right conclusion was much more obvious than a wrong, why was the latter generally made, the former seldom or never? There must have been a bias on the mind;—a fondness for profligate, rather than for pure deities. St. Paul evidently attributes pagan idolatry, not to the difficulty of obtaining better opinions, but to an aversion in man from the character of Jehovah: That, which may be known of God, is manifest in them. The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge. Therefore they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man.

If the Gentiles did not like to retain God in their knowledge, neither did the Jews. They had, we have seen, witnessed and acknowledged many illustrious miracles, wrought by Jehovah,

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in favor of a religion, which declared, that the gods of the heathen were vanity and a lie; a religion, the immediate object of which was to preserve the nation from idolatry. To avoid apostasy, there were many reasons of interest as well as duty. Besides this there is generally prevalent a strong partiality in favor of the national religion. A change in this particular is, by the Deity himself, ranked among the most extraordinary events: Pass over the isles of Chittim and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see, if there be any such thing: Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? It is immediately subjoined: But my people have changed their glory for that which cannot profit.

Now, if Jews and Gentiles have shown unequivocally a dislike to the moral purity of God, they have evinced beyond the possibility of doubt the immorality of their own character.

Were there not some moral taint, or wrong tendency common to the whole species, we might justly expect to find some individuals, not guilty of having violated that law, which is holy, just, and good; that law, every command of which has the sanction of reason. Of all the remote islands, which of later years have been discovered, we might naturally hope, that there would be some, whose inhabitants having learned the character of God from his works, were habituated to worship the eternal Spirit in spirit and in truth. But the fact is, that these discoveries tend to establish the doctrine we are considering. Wherever there are human forms, there is misery and vice. A community, whose leading object it is to obey reason, cultivate moral purity, and secure the favor of God, is not to be found on the earth.

Finally: Our opinion of mankind is generally, perhaps universally, less favorable, in proportion to our converse with the world.

If a man is credulous, and readily presumes on the correct views of men, it is commonly and justly remarked, that he is ignorant of mankind; and that further acquaintance will teach

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him better. This sentiment is usually expressed without the most distant apprehension of the inference, to which it leads.

From the preceding remarks, it appears, that whatever theory we adopt in accounting for the perverseness of man, the fact is undeniable; and further, whether there is in man by nature, a wrong tendency, a moral taint, or not, facts and appearances are, and always have been precisely as if the doctrine were true; and extremely different from what they probably would have been, had the doctrine been false. Greater disorder could not have been expected, had men been by nature inclined to evil; much less, would have been rationally expected, were they not thus inclined.

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LECTURE XXXI.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

Though many facts have been mentioned in the preceding lectures, highly dishonorable to the moral character of man, there are others of a contrary aspect, which are supposed to invalidate the conclusion to which the former would lead. If there is much vice among men, there is likewise, it may be thought, much virtue. If there is much perfidy, idleness, dissipation, and profaneness, there is undeniably much truth, fidelity, diligence, and temperance, and much decency of manner, in treating things sacred.

I answer, that advocates for the doctrine of human depravity, do not deny the existence of real virtue or holiness among men. They only deny, that this is the native production of the human heart, or ever exists there, without the particular agency of the Almighty. They further suppose, that the qualities which have been mentioned, such as veracity, temperance, industry, etc., are by no means to be considered as conclusive evidence of real virtue; i. e. of such a state of heart as God and reason require; since these qualities are generally conducive to worldly advantage. Without veracity a man can neither enjoy reputation, nor conveniently transact business. Without temperance and industry, he will be subject to the like embarrassment. Profaneness of language, or levity in regard to things sacred, exposes a man to the displeasure of many, whom it is his interest not to offend. An atheist, therefore, were he a man of prudence, would be guilty of none of these vices.

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But there are many, you say, whose regularity of deportment evidently arises not from considerations of present convenience, but from their belief in a future retribution. The fact is not to be controverted. But before we can use it in proof of moral goodness, it is necessary to ascertain, whether this abstinence from crimes, proceeds from a love to moral rectitude, as such, or from the fear of future punishment. For, whether human actions proceed from the fear of temporal or eternal punishment they are essentially the same. If the fear of being disgraced, or imprisoned tomorrow, be a motive insufficient to constitute an action virtuous, it cannot be constituted such by the fear of being disgraced or punished beyond the grave. All that can be proved in favor of a person, thus actuated, is, that a wrong disposition has not the same degree of ascendancy over him, which it might have over some others in the like circumstances. It will hardly be asserted by any person, in the least habituated to contemplate moral subjects, that fear of personal disadvantage or suffering is essentially virtuous. Therefore, so far as the regularity observable among men, is the result of no higher principle than fear, it affords no evidence of human virtue. It only proves, that vice or moral corruption, has not taken such entire possession of the mind, as to exclude from it all considerations of reason and personal interest.

A plausible objection to the doctrine, we are endeavoring to prove, may be supposed to arise from those social feelings, and those attachments of consanguinity, which are extensively, if not universally, discoverable among men.

I answer; if these social feelings are indeed virtuous, or morally good, the objection is much to the purpose; and although it would not invalidate the proofs, already adduced of general depravity, it would prove that there is, in the heart of man, by nature, real virtue yet remaining.

Social feelings, parental affection, etc., are amiable qualities, essential to the existence of civil society, and extremely conducive to the happiness of man; but there is nothing in them, I apprehend, either virtuous or vicious. One man is naturally

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inclined to cheerfulness; another to gravity. This difference probably arises from bodily organization.

But whether it does or does not, there is nothing of morality in it. To ascertain the moral character of a man, we do not inquire, whether he is naturally cheerful or gloomy.

The reasons for believing that social feelings, parental affection, etc. though they may be under the influence of moral principles, are not of themselves moral qualities, are the following.

1. They are by no means proportionate to the good or bad characters of men. In some persons, whose lives are dishonest, impure and profane, you perceive parental affection, as strong as it is in the most virtuous. Crimes the most atrocious have been perpetrated under the influence of parental feelings. Nor does the strongest friendship for an individual necessarily prove any real love of virtue. It was the excessive fondness of Achilles for Patroclus, which induced him to sacrifice human victims, and to express the barbarous desire of feeding on the body of Hector. It was the friendship of Zopyrus for Darius, which induced him voluntarily to mangle and mutilate his own person. But these sufferings were, in regard to the Babylonians, the covering of deep dissimulation and perfidy.

Virtue sometimes requires, not indeed to eradicate these feelings, but to act in opposition to their dictates. Instance the elder Brutus, whom, as a magistrate, duty required to punish his own sons for conspiring against the State. Now, if the social or parental affections, were in themselves morally good, the stronger these affections were, the more, other things being equal, would there be of moral goodness; or, if these affections be the result of moral goodness, when they are strongest, the heart must of necessity be the most virtuous.

It may be replied, that in the cases above mentioned, the irregularity proceeds from the excess of a virtuous principle. By the term virtuous principle, must be meant either virtue itself, or something distinct from it. If the latter, i. e. if social affections be something distinct from virtue, it is precisely what I am endeavoring to prove. But if by virtuous principle, is

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meant virtue or moral goodness, the objection implies, that moral evil arises from an excess of moral goodness. Now moral goodness consists in conformity to the requirements of God. It is therefore just as absurd to speak of excess in virtue, as of excess in the straightness of a line. It is just as absurd, to say that criminal irregularity can arise from excess of virtue, as to say, that two lines may coincide so precisely, as not to coincide at all.

2. My other reason for believing that social feelings and the attachments of consanguinity, are neither virtuous nor vicious, is, that they are not peculiar to moral agents. Many irrational animals, by associating together, contract a fondness for each other; and, as to the quality of attachment to their young, it is no less strong in the lion and tiger, than in the sheep and dove. Now, if these qualities are common to all animals, whether they possess reason or not, and whether their natures be mild or ferocious, their existence in man proves nothing as to his moral character.

You will reply, perhaps, that however plausible this conclusion appears, there must be some sophistry in the argument, as St. Paul, in his epistles to the Romans, and to Timothy, (Rom. 1: 31. 2 Tim. 3: 3) mentions the want of natural affection, as evincing extreme wickedness. If the quality itself were not morally good, its absence, you imagine, could not be evil.

I answer, that this inference is not the legitimate offspring of the premises. It does not certainly follow, that a quality is morally good, because the want of it proves moral disorder. Were a judge on the bench, after examining the evidence on both sides, clearly to perceive where the truth lay, no person would, from this circumstance merely, form any conclusion as to his moral character. His perception of the truth might be no more virtuous, than his perception of the witness who gave testimony. But another judge, hearing the same cause under the same circumstances, might be so far governed by his passions or interest, as not to perceive the truth; in consequence of which he forms a wrong decision. In the latter case, the

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wrong decision proves the vice of the judge; though a right decision would not have proved his virtue. Again: Voluntary intemperance always proves vice; but it is not true that voluntary temperance always proves virtue. So, the telling of truth is, in itself, neither virtuous nor vicious; but the telling of that which is not true, is good evidence of moral depravity. It may, in like manner, be true, that natural affection is not a moral quality; and yet that it always exists in man, till smothered or extinguished by excessive crimes.

Let us next consider what evidence the Scriptures give concerning the character of man.

As they were given by inspiration of God, their testimony, if rightly understood, fully substantiates any doctrine. But, when facts are contrary to the seeming import of any passage, there is a strong presumption, that the seeming is not the real import. As to the moral condition of man, facts and the most obvious sense of Scripture perfectly coincide.

1. The object of our Saviour's advent implies, that the character of man is vitiated: The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Again: The Son of man came into the world to save sinners. It is likewise asserted, that Christ tasted death for every man; that he gave his life for this world. It appears then, that our Lord's coming had relation to the state of the whole human race. But if his coming had relation to the whole human race, and the object of it was to save sinners, it follows, that all men were of this character. And further, as the object of his coming is declared, in other words, to be the salvation of them that were lost, it follows, that this too, was universally the condition of man. The former, perhaps, would be more readily conceded, than the latter. If man is accountable; if there is in existence such a thing as moral obligation, the moral delinquency of man cannot be questioned. No one will assert, that man is entirely innocent; but from these passages of Scripture, it appears, that his departure from innocence is such, as to expose him to perdition.

2. Christ speaks of the world, as being hostile to his religion.

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(John 7: 7.) The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Here are two important assertions: 1. That the works of mankind are evil; 2. That they hated our Saviour for exhibiting this truth.

Those who follow the example and doctrines of Christ, are said to be a community, acting on moral principles, differing from those which influence the world in general: They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. In connexion with this, Christ repeats the idea, which has just been noticed, viz. that there is hostility between his disciples and other men: I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them. This sentiment is often conveyed in the same words. The least that can be possibly meant by such language, is, that the general current of human feelings is less favorable to Christians on account of their religion. But, so far as Christians obey their religion, they resemble their master, and him, by whom their master was sent. This is not merely an inference now made; it was expressly asserted by our Saviour, who said: They have both seen and hated both me and my Father. There was, then, at least in all to whom this language applied, a dislike of moral rectitude; a dislike of good men, of Christ and of the Father. Considering what was shown under the last particular, viz. that the gospel declares all men to be sinners, even in so high a degree, as to be exposed to perdition, it seems unreasonable to limit the term world, in the preceding passages, in which Christ speaks of the world's enmity to his religion; or to suppose, that none are comprehended in it, but certain individuals of uncommon depravity.

3. That infernal being, to whom the Scriptures give the name of Satan, or the Devil, is denominated the god of this world. His devotees are, therefore, the inhabitants of this world. They are, therefore, obedient to his dominion. It would be easy to show, that not an evil principle merely, but an intelligent agent is here meant. But let it, if you please, be conceded for a moment, that by the term Satan is meant a principle of evil;

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the consequence is not less formidable; viz. that mankind are under the influence of an evil principle.

4. In the eighth chapter of Genesis, is a passage, strikingly to our present purpose: The Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. Of those stronger passages in the sixth chapter, asserting, that every imagination of man's heart is only evil continually, it may be plausibly said, that they describe not the character of mankind, but of that generation. But the sense of these words in the eighth chapter, cannot be thus limited. They relate not to any detachment of men; but to the whole mass. And, so far as our subject is concerned, it is perfectly immaterial, whether the passage be read for, or although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; as this particle has no effect on the proposition, but only on its connexion with what precedes. If the term *for* be exchanged for *although* the sense will be: I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, although the imagination of his heart being evil from his youth, his wickedness may, on some future occasion, become as enormous as was theirs, whom the flood destroyed. If the word *for* be retained, the meaning will be, in a small degree, different. I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for the imagination of his heart is evil from his youth; and therefore, his future crimes may call for continual repetitions of this exterminating judgment. The moral disorder of the human heart, is, on either supposition, asserted with equal clearness.

5. That mankind, in the gross, are sinners, and to such a degree, as to be exposed to the divine wrath, is further proved by the apostle's declaration in the second chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians: Among whom we all had our conversation in times past, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.

The connexion of the passage is this. In the latter part of the preceding chapter, the apostle had mentioned the moral

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change, which had been produced in the character of the Ephesians, under the figure of a resurrection, or revival; comparing the power, by which it was effected, to that which the Father exerted in raising Christ from the dead. By the introduction of this comparison, he is, according to his manner, led off for a moment from his subject, and resumes it in the beginning of the second chapter, which begins thus: And you hath he quickened, or brought to life, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past, ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. That thus far, Gentiles are meant, is conceded without controversy. It immediately follows: Among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, even as others. It will be allowed, I think, that nothing can be more natural, than to understand the apostle as speaking, in this latter quotation, of Christians in general, comprehending both Jews and Gentiles. Had that been his design, he could not have used more appropriate language. He had charged the Gentile converts with having lived in great profligacy; and then subjoins, that this gloomy representation may be applied generally to the character of Christians, previously to their embracing Christianity; for they all had the same origin, and were by nature inclined to sin, even as others.

There is, however, an explanation of the text, which if true, destroys its pertinency, as it respects the purpose for which it is now adduced. The two prominent points of this explanation are, 1. That the apostle does not here speak of Christians in general, but of Gentiles. 2. That by nature is meant custom. As to the first, it is said, when the apostle had reminded those of the Ephesian church, who had been Gentiles, what their character formerly was, he adds, such was the character of us all, who were Gentiles; and we were by nature, i. e. by custom, children of wrath, even as other Gentiles. It must be considered as a great inconvenience, to say the least, attending

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this explanation, that St. Paul was not a Gentile; and, therefore, if he ranked himself among them, it was by mere courtesy. In this chapter, let it be noticed, he speaks distinctly of Jews and Gentiles; of the wall of partition, which had formerly kept them separate; which wall was then demolished. Now, it is highly unreasonable to suppose, that St. Paul, when distinguishing Jews from Gentiles, should take himself from the Jews to whom he belonged, to rank himself among the Gentiles, to whom he did not belong. The fact seems to be this, that when the apostle uses the term *ye*, throughout this whole chapter, he designates Gentiles particularly; when he uses the term *we*, he speaks of Christians in general, whether of Jewish or Gentile origin; and when speaking of the Jews distinctly, he mentions them in the third person; e. g. in the seventeenth verse: Christ came and preached peace to you, that were afar off; i. e. to the Gentiles and to them that were nigh, i. e. the Jews. If he meant to rank himself with the Gentiles, why did he not say, Christ came and preached peace to us, that were afar off? We surely ought not without necessity to suppose that the writer uses the terms *we* and *ye* indiscriminately; but necessity is so far from requiring this, that on such a supposition, the chapter is far less intelligible. Besides, that these terms are not indiscriminately used throughout the chapter, is conceded by the advocates of this explanation.

Hence it is reasonable to believe, that when the apostle said, we all are, by nature, children of wrath even as others, he spake in general terms, and had no distinct reference to Gentile converts.

The second important point in the explanation, which we are considering, is that the term nature, as used in this place, means nothing more than custom. Should this prove a just remark, it would not, in any measure, invalidate the conclusion that mankind are by some means or other, children of wrath; it only relates to the manner of their becoming such. But the remark itself, though it has all the aid which learning and talents can give, still remains destitute of any support from the common use

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of the term in the New Testament. It is there invariably used in its ordinary signification. The fourteenth verse of the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, affords no exception. The apostle is there showing the propriety of preserving a distinction between the habits of men and women, and the indecency of annihilating this distinction: Doth not even nature itself teach, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? "The emphasis used, αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις, nature itself," shows, saith an able writer, "that the author does not mean custom, but nature in its proper sense. It was, indeed, long custom, which made having the head covered a token of subjection, and of a feminine habit and appearance; but nature itself, nature, in its proper sense, teaches, that it is a shame for a man to appear with the established signs of the female sex, and with significations of inferiority." On the subject before us, the opinion of Celsus ought not to pass without observation. "This is, indeed, very true," saith he, "that mankind is, some way, naturally disposed to sin." (Glass. iv. 322.) If it be asked, what is meant, when we say, that the doing of wrong is natural to man, I answer, that moral course may be considered as natural to man, which, without any divine influence on the heart, he generally or universally pursues. That may be considered as not being natural to man, which, without such influence, he seldom or never pursues. Now, it is the language, both of Jewish and Christian Scriptures, that holiness or moral rectitude is the result of divine operation. Jesus said: Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He informs us afterwards, that to be born again, is the same thing as to be born of God. The alteration expressed by this language, is doubtless of a moral kind. Previously, therefore, to this change, extraneously produced, there is a want of moral qualifications for heaven; i. e. there is a want of piety, a want of real virtue. But, if piety or real virtue would not exist in the heart, without the agency of God, a want of this quality is natural to man. The term, which Christ used, in his discourse with Nicodemus, is as general as can be conceived. He does

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not say, "except a heathen be born again;" nor, "except an extravagant profligate be born again;" but "except any man be born again, *εὰν μὴ τις γεννήθη ἄνωθεν*, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Finally, the doctrine in question receives much support from the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. The inspired writer there considers the whole human family, as consisting of those, who are in the flesh, and those who are in the spirit. The character of the former is, that they mind the things of the flesh; the character of the latter, that they mind the things of the spirit. It is implied further, that all would be of the former description, i. e. all would make the present world the centre of their desires and efforts, were none the subjects of an external influence: Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

It would be easy to multiply quotations of the same import. Now, when we consider the nature of the Christian economy; the object, which it has professedly in view; the passages, already quoted, relating to the character of man; when we consider the testimony of ancient and modern history; the conduct of men, whether civilized or barbarous; whether enveloped in the horrors of Gentile superstition, blest with that partial light, which dawned upon the Jews, or enjoying the unmixed radiance of Christianity; when we observe, in a country, professing to acknowledge the divine origin of this light, crimes, various and without number; universal unwillingness to make the Supreme Being the subject of contemplation or discourse; especially when we look into our own hearts, and perceive a perverted taste, aversion from the commands of reason, and the Almighty; conscience asserting the claims of rectitude, and the will pertinaciously refusing them; when we view all these considerations in their connexion with one another, is it reasonable to deny the universal and native depravity of man? Though it should be allowed, as doubtless it must be, that there

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are considerable difficulties attending the doctrine, the denial of it is accompanied by those that are still greater. May God enable us to seek truth with impartiality, and in all cases to give that degree of assent, which is proportionate to the evidence exhibited.

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LECTURE XXXII.

HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

My present object is,

I. Briefly to inquire as to the extent or degree of that corruption, the existence of which I have before endeavored to prove:

II. To notice some objections to the doctrine in question additional to those, which have been already mentioned:

III. Inquire, whether there is any connexion between the sin of our first parents, and the present moral character of their descendants.

I. As to the extent or degree of that corruption, the existence of which I have endeavored to prove. It is not implied, in the remarks which have been made, that the disorders, common to the human heart, are the greatest conceivable. The Scriptures, with great clearness and frequency, inform us, that there will be diversity, not only in the rewards, bestowed on the righteous, but in the sufferings endured by the wicked. Though the wicked will find no period to their punishment, the degree awarded to some, will be less than that inflicted on others: He who knows not his Lord's will, and does things worthy of stripes, will be beaten with less severity than he, who does the same things with more distinct knowledge of his duty. On the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, will doubtless be laid, in the day of judgment, no common burden of infamy and pain; which will, however, be exceeded by theirs, who contemned the personal ministry of Jesus Christ. Pun-

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ishment will be proportionate to guilt. Therefore, all sinners are not, in the same degree, guilty. But in one particular, there is universal similarity. They are all destitute of that holiness, or moral goodness, which is implied in love to the Supreme Being. If not, all the difference between those whom God will receive, and those whom he will reject, consists, not in the nature of their characters, but in their degree of goodness. Those who have much of divine love, will be received, and made eternally glorious; those, who have little of this quality, will be forever the objects of their Maker's displeasure. Now, it would be quite inconsistent with the general import of Scripture, to suppose, that any, who have sincere affection for their Creator, on account of his moral rectitude, will be treated as incorrigible enemies. But if the moral character of God, is not the object of our love, such love can neither be the foundation of virtue, nor necessarily connected with it.

Further: It is asserted by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, that they who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans, 8: 8.) What is meant by this term, appears by the connexion in which it stands. Those to whom this term applies, and they who are led by the Spirit, constitute the whole human family. Persons of the latter description, are called the sons of God; and it is said concerning them, that they shall live. Of the others, who live after the flesh, it is said, they shall die. But this assertion is true in relation to all, who are not led by the Spirit. Of all such then, it is true, that they cannot please God. Of persons who have love to the Supreme Being on account of his holiness, or moral rectitude, this cannot be asserted. Therefore, all who are not led by the Spirit, are destitute of this quality; and consequently of all virtue, of which this quality is the foundation.

It is further said, that the carnal mind is enmity against God: that it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be. It cannot be questioned, that the carnal mind is the mind of those, who, agreeably to the apostle's language, are in the flesh. As the apostle must have had some meaning, when he asserted,

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concerning such persons, that their minds are enmity against God, to ascertain his meaning, must be an object worth inquiry. That men have a dislike to all restraints, whether civil or divine, which they habitually disregard, will hardly be doubted. They, who habitually refuse compliance with the laws of God, must dislike those laws. Though their reason may, their hearts do not approve them. But these laws are an expression of the character of God. If, therefore, they dislike the one, it is impossible, that they should not dislike the other. It is certain then, that those who do not live after the spirit, dislike the divine moral character. That they are not subject, i. e. not obedient to the divine law, is beyond dispute.

Suppose further, that persons, thus disliking their Maker, as a moral being, should reflect that his law will be executed, and the punishment which it threatens, will be inflicted, would it not follow, as a natural consequence, that their feelings of dislike would be increased? Were they not restrained by fear, and had they nothing further to hope from the Almighty, would not their dislike, thus increased to violent enmity, be expressed by word? A disloyal subject under an earthly monarchy, while persevering in sedition or disobedience, thereby exposing himself to punishment, would, as a matter of course, not only dislike the government, but desire a revolution; which revolution he would effect, were power sufficient lodged in his hands. While convinced of the impracticability of such an enterprise, he may never express such a wish, nor perceive it distinctly formed in his mind. Now, if disobedience has the same expression in regard to the divine government, which it doubtless has in relation to civil government, it follows, that the wicked man's dislike of the law, and consequently of the character of God, would under certain circumstances, lead to measures, most strikingly impious.

That we may understand still more distinctly the apostle's assertion, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, let it be considered, under what circumstances, one man becomes the enemy of another. These are an opposition of character and

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interest. If there is a man, whom I know to be of such a character, as to view mine with unvarying displeasure or abhorrence, and who is preparing to inflict heavy sufferings in proof of such displeasure, my feelings towards that person are not those of friendship, but hostility. Now, the wicked, if they view the subject justly, know that Deity is of such character, as to contemplate theirs with displeasure; and that he is preparing to inflict heavy sufferings in proof of this displeasure. Must there not be the same inference in this case, as in the other?

But wicked men, you reply, are not conscious of possessing a mind, hostile to their Maker. The remark is true; but admission of its truth imposes no necessity of relinquishing the doctrine in question. Suppose the best created being in the universe were in company with the worst; while each was ignorant of the other's character, there would be no actual hostility. Were two persons, between whom there had been a settled enmity, brought together, under circumstances, which prevented each from knowing the other, no unfriendly feelings would be excited. Yet they are in truth enemies. In like manner, if sinners mistake the attributes and requirements of God, fancying, that no great difference exists between his character and their own, it is easy to perceive, why they are not conscious of any hostility. Although they should, in words, acknowledge the extent of his demands, yet if they never make these the subject of deliberate reflection, or if they suppose, that he, who makes these demands, will, in some way or other, dispense with them, feelings of enmity are not likely to be perceived.

In using the term enmity against God, in application to the human heart, we mean nothing more, than that state of feeling, which necessarily results to a corrupt being, from contemplating the divine rectitude, in connexion with a full persuasion of his own exposure to punishment, in consequence of his opposition to this rectitude. There can be no particular excellence in any sound, or combination of letters. Extreme attachment to this, or to any term, is not to be justified. As the object of language is to convey ideas, whenever a term is found to be often mis-

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understood, to convey more or less than the speaker designs, it ought to be fully explained, or disused. But no person, I am persuaded, who believes, that the hearts of wicked men are destitute of any affection to virtue or holiness, will condemn the term enmity, as in itself improper.

I shall now in the second place notice some objections to the doctrine in general, additional to those, already mentioned.

1. It is said, if sinning is natural, man cannot be blame-worthy.

You will recollect what was said in the last lecture; viz. "That may be considered, as natural to man, which, without any divine influence, he generally or universally pursues." The question then is whether a man ceases to be blame-worthy, because, without divine influence on the heart, he generally or universally pursues a course of disobedience? Let this question be considered, 1st, on the ground of necessity; 2d, on the ground of freedom. They, who believe in the doctrine of necessity, whether on the principle of Mr. Edwards or Dr. Priestley, can, with no consistency, urge this objection. They suppose, that all actions through the universe, are necessary. Yet they believe, that there are such qualities, as virtue and vice. Now, if necessity does not exculpate him, who, in a moral point of view, proceeds obliquely, part of the time, it will not exculpate those, who never proceed in a right direction. Once admit the doctrine of necessity, and so far as the present objection, so far as human accountability is concerned, it matters not whether wrong conduct be occasional or perpetual.

Let us now contemplate the objection on supposition of human liberty. It is evident, that men do sin part of the time. This, it is conceded, is not inconsistent with freedom; and the transgressor is justly punished. That some individuals sin with great frequency, will not be denied. Do they for this reason, cease to be blame-worthy? Let us proceed a little further, and suppose, that a few abandoned persons pursue uniformly that course, which the individuals last mentioned, pursue occasionally. Do they cease to be criminal? If men, without con-

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straint, and in opposition to reason and interest, choose to do wrong part of the time, they may uniformly make the same choice. If a disposition to moral evil, or, if you please, a disposition, criminally defective, occasionally existing, does not prove a necessitating impulse, neither would the same disposition, were it constant.

2. It may be further objected, that the doctrine before us appears to attribute moral evil to those, who are incapable of moral action.

Whether such representations of the doctrine are ever made, as are fairly liable to this objection, I do not undertake to determine. It is sufficient, if it does not lie against the doctrine, as it has, in these lectures, been defined. At what time, moral agency commences in human creatures, it would be extremely difficult to determine. Previously to the existence of moral agency, no guilt can be contracted. It is doubtless absurd to predicate virtue or vice of a creature, incapable of both. Nor would it be less absurd to speak of reward or retribution, or moral goodness, in reference to such a being. But if children at a very early period are not moral agents; if they are not capable of doing or feeling wrong, they are, it will be remembered, equally incapable of doing or feeling right, and therefore, as it should seem, perfectly unqualified to partake in a retribution. The doctrine attempted to be proved, is this, and this only, that human creatures do not practise righteousness, or sincerely obey the divine law, without divine influence; a proposition, which has no necessary connexion with the period, at which moral agency commences.

If any of the human race are taken from the world, while destitute of qualities, which capacitate them for moral action, God will doubtless dispose of them agreeably to that wisdom and rectitude, which characterize his government.

It is, I suppose, scarcely necessary to say, that the doctrine of depravity, as here stated, does not imply, that one being can be answerable for the sins of another. Whatever connexion there may be between the sin of any progenitor and the present

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moral state of the world, we are, without reasonable doubt, exclusively answerable for personal offences. The sin of another person can no more be my sin, than the palpitations of his heart can be the palpitations of mine. No appointment, constitution, or covenant, can create identity between two beings, which are different, nor render it true, that a creature can have sinned before he existed. But,

3. It may well deserve inquiry, whether there is any connexion between the sin of our first parents and the present moral character of their descendants.

That our present condition is, in some respects, affected by the apostasy of Adam, is an opinion, almost uniformly received among the friends of revealed religion. That temporal death is the consequence of this defection, is equally conceded by those, whose opinions on many subjects widely differ. If this opinion be correct, that animal constitution, which now tends to decay and death, had not originally the same tendency. Considered merely as an animal, therefore, man is not the same, as was Adam before his transgression. Without any positive evidence on the subject, it would appear not improbable, that this change in the constitution of man would produce some effect on his moral character. The way is then prepared for inquiry, whether the Scriptures afford any evidence, that this was in fact the case.

In the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, a comparison is instituted between Adam and Christ;—between the disadvantages, conveyed to mankind through the medium of the one, and the benefits received through the medium of the other. Now the latter, i. e. the benefits received through Christ, are chiefly of a moral or spiritual nature. There would be no ground for a contrast, then, unless the detriment received from Adam, comprehended in it something moral or spiritual.

But, it is of still greater importance to observe, that the language, used by the apostle, is such, as cannot fairly be interpreted to mean any thing less. "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the right-

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eousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For, as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

But how, you may ask, is it possible that men should become sinners, through the offence of a distant progenitor? I answer: This is not possible, without their own consent. His sin is not theirs; nor can any constitution or appointment render it so. If a parent exhibits nothing but examples of profligacy before his children, his crimes are not chargeable to them. Yet, in consequence of his crimes, it is not only possible, but highly probable, that they will become as criminal as himself. Further, if his animal system is so organized, as to excite him strongly to particular crimes, say, intemperance or revenge; his intemperance, his revenge is not theirs. Yet his animal system may be transmitted to them, through occasion of which, they may equal or exceed him in crimes.

It has been shown already, that as human creatures may choose sin part of the time, or be partially sinful, consistently with freedom; so it implies no absurdity to suppose, that, without any constraint destroying free agency, they may choose sin uniformly, or be entirely destitute of moral goodness. The fact, that they do thus choose, will be somewhat more easily conceivable, if the Scriptures teach us to believe, that there is, consequent on the apostasy of Adam, a universal disorder, or deterioration in the animal economy.

Every person, who has attentively read the New Testament, but especially the writings of St. Paul, must have observed, that much is said of the body, the flesh, and the spirit.

"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if, through the Spirit, ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." We read likewise, of the "law in the members," and the "law of the mind." Obedience to the former, is the same thing, as to "live after the flesh;" obedience to the latter, the same, as habitually to "mortify the deeds of the body." The reason of man is always on the side of the gospel and the Holy Spirit.

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It is the dictate of reason to obey God, and to counteract every inclination, that opposes his commands. It is the dictate of reason to walk by the Spirit, i. e. to act conformably to divine precepts and divine suggestions. Those, on the contrary, who live under the influence of a sensual mind, oppose equally the reason of man and the empire of God. But all are said to be in the flesh, in whom a moral change has not been divinely produced; and those of the latter description only, are said to have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them. As the understanding is always coincident with the divine commands, and a sensual mind is in opposition to both, we see the ground of that conflict, which, in all ages, has been observed to exist in human beings: "I see the right and approve it; but pursue the wrong."

The passages quoted, together with numerous others of similar import, lead us to conclude, that the present moral degradation of man is derived through the medium of the flesh or bodily appetites. It was through these, that the first temptation was conveyed to Adam. His eye was delighted with the forbidden fruit; and his appetite urged him to partake of it. It is probable, that his bodily organization was from that moment altered, in righteous judgment, that his passions became strong and imperious; the flesh began a violent warfare with the Spirit; and those appetites, which led to his first sin, becoming from that moment more violent, were afterwards uniformly victorious; and this not merely through their increased impetuosity, but likewise, because the mind, by yielding, became contaminated, and ready to obey sensual impulse.

That same disordered constitution, which immediately resulted to our first parents from their sin, seems to have been transmitted to their descendants, administering temptations, which they ought to resist, but, in fact, do not; in consequence of which their minds have become sensual and corrupt; indisposed to spiritual objects and pursuits, and disinclined to honor the Creator, who is over all, God blessed forevermore. Agreeably to this are the words of our Saviour: That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.

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It is remarkable that St. Paul, when enumerating the works of the flesh, does not confine himself to those, which we should be likely to trace to such an origin; but comprehends in the number, "idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, seditions, heresies, and envyings; hereby plainly suggesting, that there is but one origin of all the moral disorders of man.

I will here make a few remarks, which might with more propriety have been made before, as to the effect, which human depravity has upon the understanding. Intellects, simply considered, are not the seat of moral disorder. The understanding, if we speak with precision, cannot be depraved. Yet the operations of the understanding are doubtless liable to be influenced by the heart or will. The good man, therefore, other things being equal, is more likely than another to obtain correct views of religious truth; 1. Because he has fewer prejudices; 2. Because, having a fondness for subjects of a moral nature, he acquires a facility of comprehending them. This happens agreeably to a general law of our natures. That which is interesting to the mind, often occurs. Persons acquire a readiness and dexterity in viewing and comparing objects, to which they are accustomed. On this principle, the artificer immediately forms a judgment of any materials, used in his art. On this principle the military man sees, at once, all the advantages and disadvantages of a particular station. On the same principle, the well informed merchant sees all the bearings of a question in commerce, though an easier one in law or morals might be wholly unintelligible. The best man in the world, perhaps, has no more intellects than the worst; but if, in this particular, they were originally equal, the decisions of the former, in general, especially those concerning the relation between man and his Creator, are more to be relied on, than those of the latter.

I have now finished what I designed to say to you on the subject of human depravity.

Instead of recapitulating the arguments which have been used, I would close with an appeal to your feelings. I take it for

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granted, that no person will deny the correctness of, at least one assertion, which has been made, viz. that Deity requires, and has a right to require universal rectitude, i. e. unremitting conformity to reason and his own law. On this ground, I request you to make a decision, not concerning the character of our species in general, but concerning your own. And lest there should be an indistinctness, from taking into view too great a portion of your existence, let your attention be confined to a single day. "Whether you eat, drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." You rise in the morning;—is it with a pious determination to devote the day to your Maker? You attend devotional exercises in this place. Is it with a spirit of faith, love and submission? You pursue the lessons of the day with commendable assiduity. But does God, does the Redeemer, does a heart, impressed with duty, excite this diligence? The day passes, and the shades of evening cover you. Are these hours accompanied with a sensible conviction, that "you are not your own but bought with a price?" On reviewing the transactions of the day, concerning what portion of the whole would you say: It was an act of cordial submission to God? But if one day afford no such instance, do all the days of which life is composed? If not, the apostle's language is perfectly intelligible, "Having no hope, and without God in the world."

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LECTURE XXXIII.

ATONEMENT.

In preceding lectures, we have endeavored to show the general and deep apostasy of the human race;—that we possess a readiness to sin, an indisposition to duty; and, unless excited by divine influence, do never perform actions, which are holy, or strictly speaking, virtuous. If this doctrine has been proved, or is susceptible of proof, you cannot doubt for a moment, that it is at once melancholy and interesting. That inattention and levity, with which this subject is often treated, is wholly without excuse. Even if the doctrine were not capable of being fully proved; even if the objections against it appeared somewhat stronger than the evidence, on which it rests, so important are its connexions, if true, that no sober man would mention it with ridicule, or indifference. We pay attention, with good reason, even to possibilities, when the event, considered possible, is acknowledged to be of high moment. But the doctrine of human depravity cannot be known to rest on plenary evidence, without more attention, than many, who reject it, are pleased to bestow on the subject.

Though I have endeavored to show, that in the character of man, previously to regeneration, there is an entire absence of holiness, or moral rectitude, the importance of the doctrine, now to be investigated, viz. that of atonement, does by no means depend on the success of this attempt. It may be denied, that men are entirely depraved, but that they are depraved

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in a greater or less degree, is far from admitting dispute. If there is in the universe a rule of moral rectitude, to which intelligent beings are bound to conform, it is undeniable, that mankind are sinners. If so, they are in need of pardon. In the christian religion, pardon is offered. Our present object is to ascertain on what ground this offer is made; in other words, whether atonement has been made for sin.

In relation to this subject, it may be said, in the first place, that nothing is more common under the divine government, than for one person to be the medium of communicating benefits to another. So far as we know, there is not an insulated object in the universe; nothing which is not dependent on other things, and which does not influence them in its turn. Most of the enjoyments, which we receive, are conveyed through the channel, either of friends, or of those, whose own interest is promoted by advancing ours. And as it is so common, for Deity to bestow favors on us through the instrumentality of men, his doing it by the intervention of angels, or of his own Son, would be evidently analogous to the general methods of his providence.

Through the instrumentality of good men, the Sovereign of the universe bestows on the wicked two kinds of benefits; viz. such as are calculated to bring them to a better mind; and others, which relate to present enjoyments.

Prophets, apostles, and all good men, who have zealously and faithfully exhibited moral truth, or those excellent effects on the life, which it is calculated to produce, have been the channels, through which divine mercy has been conveyed to the world. In this way, the profligate have been restrained, the thoughtless have been led to reflection, and, in thousands, permanent change of character has been the result.

But men often find themselves, by their indiscretions or vices, reduced to a state, from which repentance and reformation will not recover them. They are then in need of other assistance, than that of instruction or moral suasion. If a man should dissipate his substance by prodigality, you might indeed do him a great kindness by moral discourse on the unreasona-

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bleness and criminality of his past life. But however successful these laudable endeavors may be, in producing conviction, and even a change of character, he is not thereby restored to his former condition. His means of subsistence have vanished; and without gratuitous supplies, he must perish. Repentance, however sincere, does not effect his restoration. If a person, by a course of intemperance and debauchery, destroy his health, the most profound penitence will not restore it. A speedy, and perhaps an entire recovery is impossible. But if not, it cannot be effected without medical application, and the assistance of others. If a man, whether through inattention or design, throw himself into the ocean, it is not repentance, but the efforts of his friends, which must save him from drowning. Men are indeed continually bringing difficulties on themselves, from which no efforts of their own will give relief. Nor is it at all uncommon for them to involve themselves in evils, from which they cannot be extricated, even by the greatest exertions of others. If a man is proved to have committed murder, his own repentance and the intercession of his friends, are equally unavailing to save him from punishment.

It hence follows, that if, by their apostasy from God, men are placed in a condition, from which even repentance and reformation alone, cannot afford them relief, it is perfectly analogous to events, which we constantly witness under the divine government. And should it be found, that either in this life or another, the consequences of sin, i. e. punishment, are absolutely unavoidable, it would be perfectly similar to numerous and well known facts.

Among all, who believe Christianity to be a divine religion, it is agreed that benefits are bestowed on mankind, through the intervention of Jesus Christ. Those who deny that atonement has been made for the sins of the world, cannot, however, hesitate to acknowledge that the human race in general, having broken the law of God, are sinners, and that Christ came to save them. Human salvation is, therefore, procured through intervention of Christ. There is indeed diversity of opinion as

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to the kind of assistance, which the condition of men required. All are agreed, that they needed instruction and moral suasion; and all are agreed, that this want has been supplied by the Redeemer. Ignorance and vice, it will not be denied, were obstacles to the salvation of men: these obstacles Christ came to remove. Now if there were, in addition to these, other impediments, it will hardly be denied, that their removal was likewise the object of his coming. Those, therefore, who oppose the doctrine of atonement, must do it chiefly on this ground, that nothing of the kind was necessary; and this is in fact the ground on which the doctrine is opposed. By this consideration, its opponents are led to put a construction on many passages of Scripture, which their first appearance, to say the least, would not suggest. If, therefore, it should be found, not only that the impenitence of sinners is an obstacle to their salvation, but even that the pardoning of them, when penitent, is a matter of real difficulty, the principal argument against the doctrine of atonement will be destroyed; and no reason will exist for seeking a figurative or far-fetched meaning of those passages, which seem to support it.

But though I shall endeavor to show, that there were important obstacles to the pardoning of sin merely on repentance, it is to be considered, that the non-existence of such obstacles could by no means be inferred from our inability to perceive them. Were it true that no necessity for the atonement of Christ could be discerned by us, it would still be rashness to conclude against the doctrine, so long as the language of Scripture is strongly in its favor. For, as there is relation and dependence among all parts of the divine government, any particular measure may have innumerable unknown bearings and consequences. If we could see no reason why pardon should not be extended to the penitent, solely on the ground of his penitence, the infinitely wise Governor of the universe, whose attention is not confined to any one object, nor to any part of his vast empire, who intuitively and constantly beholds all parts, and their relation to the whole, might discern that great disorders, vice,

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and misery, would result from such a measure. Therefore, should it be found that the language of Scripture is much in favor of the doctrine of atonement, they who would destroy the argument hence arising, must show not only that we can discern no necessity for an atonement, but that such necessity cannot be discerned by the Almighty.

The books of nature and revelation conspire in teaching us, that God maintains a government over the universe, and that this government, like those among men, is maintained by rewards and punishments. Nor indeed is it possible for us to conceive that government should be supported in a different manner. Let it be supposed that a wise code of laws are adopted by a particular community. In this code, punishment will of course be denounced against certain crimes. If these laws are never executed, they will be nearly or entirely useless. The utility of laws consists in their influence in deterring from crimes, and they effect this, by exciting fears of punishment; but if punishments are observed never to follow crimes, all fears of them vanish; the good have as little to hope, and the bad as little to fear, as if no laws had ever been enacted. Nor did any wise government ever consider that penitence in the criminal sufficiently atones for violations of law.

Let us inquire for a moment, what would be the result of a government, instituted on such a plan. Laws are enacted, let it be supposed, against dishonesty, arson, and murder, threatening death to all, who are guilty of these offences. Some individual, impelled by revenge or malice, enters his neighbor's house, burns his property and murders his children. The culprit is apprehended and repents of the outrage; on the manifestation of which repentance, he is immediately set at liberty. Similar crimes, whenever committed in the same manner, escape punishment. Under such an administration would the community be in a good state, or could peaceable citizens enjoy safety? What terror would the law excite in him, who was meditating mischief? Should he be apprehended, he well knows, that repentance brings impunity. Two persons, let it be im-

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agined, are guilty of the same crime. One repents, and receives no punishment. The other does not repent, and suffers the penalty of the law. The latter, before execution, complains of the partiality of the court, and supports his complaint by saying, that whereas he and the other person have equally broken the law, the other person is acquitted and he condemned. He is told in reply, that the other person has repented. He rejoins, that the law did not threaten punishment to the not repenting of a crime, but to the commission of it; that the law speaks of that particular act, and not of any subsequent temper. Besides, if the execution of a law were to depend on the subsequent temper of him who had broken it, how long a time must be assigned to the culprit, to ascertain whether he will repent or not?

Perhaps it will be said, that though both were equally guilty in breaking the law, and were consequently then equally deserving of punishment, the one by penitence has made atonement; and the other has not. The assertion is not true. Penitence has made no atonement. Those who were sufferers by the crime are not redressed, government is not supported, nothing is done to prevent future crimes or to ensure safety to the well-disposed. It is true, indeed, that if any thing could take place, answering these purposes; anything, by which the honor of the law would be secured and crimes prevented, a merciful and even a wise magistrate might be disposed to show favor to the penitent. But a government that should always forgive, and that too, without any security to its own reputation, it is evident, on a moment's reflection, could not be maintained.

I know, that "God's ways are not our ways, nor are his thoughts our thoughts." Neither can we tell, how far there is analogy between divine and human governments. But what has been observed may show, at least, how little we are to regard the observation of those who tell us, that the culprit's penitence is the whole object of civil punishment; or at least, that if this object were obtained, all necessity for punishment would cease.

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As we know not how far into the universe the effects of human apostasy may extend, or how weighty may be its influence where it is felt, our reason is by no means sufficient to determine what measures were necessary on the part of God, to counteract this influence, and to render it consistent with wisdom and goodness to forgive the offender. Yet some reasons, why atonement was necessary, may be easily discerned.

It must be an object of real importance to the universe, that the character of God should be made known. That this has a near connexion with the virtue and happiness of his intelligent offspring, cannot be doubted. The character of a parent, governor or king, is known to have great effect on the morals and happiness of those whom they respectively govern. As the moral character of the Supreme Being is perfect, he must contemplate virtue with approbation, and vice with displeasure. It is just as impossible that he should not hate the latter, as that he should not love the former. He who is indifferent to vice, is as certainly indifferent to virtue. For God not to make known, in some way, his displeasure at vice, would leave his creatures in as much suspense, as to his character, as his forbearance to exhibit his complacency in virtue. If Deity, as a perfect being, necessarily contemplates sin with aversion and abhorrence, it is both fit in itself, and necessary to the good of his empire, that this aversion should be made known. It is fit, because those feelings, which are suitable to be entertained are suitable to be made known. It is incongruous, that external deportment should not correspond with the judgment of the mind, and the emotions of the heart. It is dishonorable to God, to doubt that his administration, viewed extensively, is an expression of his character. It is necessary to the good of his universal empire, that his displeasure at sin should be made known, because happiness cannot prevail in the universe, without regularity and virtue; but in order to this, it must be seen, that the virtuous and vicious are not equally esteemed. It must be seen, which of the contending interests is patronized by the Deity. The law indeed speaks terror to the guilty; its lan-

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guage, therefore, perfectly corresponds with the divine purity; but if it be seen by all beings in the universe, many of whom perhaps are now in a state of trial, and many of whom will, at every given period, be in a state of trial, that sin is not punished; but that while the law of God expresses one thing, or speaks in a particular language, his proceedings speak a language either the reverse of this, or else materially different from it, there must, so far as we can see, be the appearance of inconsistency in him who rules the universe. That expression, with regard to good and evil, which was made by the law, is no longer apparent. "Though the words are significant," says a respectable writer of our own country, "actions are more so. It is a common and just observation, that actions speak louder than words; yea, a maxim on which we so firmly rely, that we give the whole weight to the former when they contradict the latter. All are agreed, that the mind and will of God may be intelligibly expressed in words. Yet no one will deny, that they may be written in much deeper and more legible characters, in the sensible pleasures and pains which he may bestow or inflict on us. Therefore, the evidence of God's love of virtue, and hatred of vice, must ultimately be derived from the treatment which he gives his creatures. In this we ultimately and most sensibly discover his views of the characters of his creatures, and the estimation in which he holds them; and in this we most clearly discover the feelings of the divine mind toward virtue and vice." (West.)

That the divine displeasure against sin should be rendered manifest, it is necessary, not only as purity of character in a magistrate tends to promote the virtue and happiness of those over whom he presides; but likewise, because motives to obedience will, in that case, be much more distinct and powerful. While this displeasure is not shown, either by sufferings inflicted on the offender or by some other method, it is scarcely to be conceived that the creatures of God, should not cease to view sin in its true light; and that they should not expect impunity in case of apostasy. When it is once understood under an earth-

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ly government, that repentance universally supersedes the execution of laws, the motives to obedience being enfeebled, crimes will be multiplied. But motives are certainly employed in the divine government, as in those maintained among men. It seems, therefore, that the pardoning of sin, without some attendant act or event expressing the same thing, which is expressed in the divine law, would encourage disorder and vice through the empire of God. The subjects of his government would naturally, I should think necessarily, conclude, that his abhorrence of sin was less than his threatenings had led them to imagine.

"Whatever may be the rules of pardoning mercy," says Mr. Hampton, "it can hardly be supposed that a wise and good lawgiver will exercise it, or mitigate the rigor of the law, especially in many instances, without showing at the same time, his regard to the reasonableness of the law and the equity of its sanctions; or, which is the same, to the demands of his law and justice; because otherwise his conduct would be an encouragement to disobedience, and of consequence, his mercy, though a favor to a few, would be injustice to the whole."

If God see fit to pardon sin on any conditions, we cannot reasonably suppose that they will be such, as either to give a wrong impression concerning himself, or to propagate a spirit of disorder and rebellion. It is highly important that God should be known through the universe, as a God hating sin, and that every apprehension of a different nature should be removed. God cannot deny himself, nor will he ever cease to exhibit, in his providence, that proportion, harmony, and divine beauty, which adorn his character.

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LECTURE XXXIV.

ATONEMENT.

It was said in the last lecture, that those, who oppose the doctrine of our Saviour's atonement, must do it on this ground, that nothing of the kind was necessary.

It was remarked, in reply, that even if we were unable to discern any need of atonement, i. e. any obstacles to the exercise of mercy on terms of repentance merely, it would, by no means, follow, that such reasons did not exist in the view of that Being, who beholds the whole universe, with all its relations and connexions. But far from conceding the truth of what is here supposed, I proceeded to suggest a number of considerations, which, according to the best ideas we can form on the subject, present obstacles to the pardoning of sin, merely on condition of repentance.

I shall now apply more directly, to the government of God, some observations then made concerning civil governments, with a view further to show, that the propriety of pardoning sin on the sole condition of repentance, is far from being obvious.

Were offenders made happy on so easy terms, the obedient and disobedient would be treated alike. Whereas, the divine law declares, it shall go well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; the event, as here supposed, is, that it will go well with both. For if the wicked, i. e. those, who have sinned while in a state of probation, are made happy, they receive precisely what was promised to the righteous; nothing more than happiness being promised to the latter. Now, if the matter

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were left here, would not an observing spectator of God's proceedings, on being told that virtue is an object of divine approbation, and vice, of the divine displeasure, immediately reply, "How does this appear? Two beings, we see, are put on their trial for happiness, on condition of obedience; but he, who disobeys, receives the same treatment, as the other."

Or, suppose two beings in a state of trial disobey their Creator. The one repents and is rewarded; the other does not repent, and is punished. In the latter case, i. e. when the impenitent is punished, the divine law and the divine proceedings express precisely the same thing, viz. hatred of sin. In the former case, the expressions of the two are completely opposite.

That the consideration of repentance does not legally justify this difference, will be evident, when we consider the necessary extent of divine requirements. These are nothing less, than unfailing moral rectitude. If it be suitable, that Jehovah should demand of his creatures conformity, in any instance, to that which is morally right; such conformity, may, with propriety, be demanded in all instances. Indeed, there would be undeniable inconsistency, were not the demand universal. You cannot easily suppose any thing, more dishonorable to the supreme Lawgiver, than that he should tolerate particular violations of law, on condition that the remainder should be kept. If intelligent creatures conform to the law, it is no more than their duty: it cannot, of course, have the slightest influence, strictly speaking, in making amends for crimes. It is not the less true, that I violated the law yesterday, because I have kept it to day; nor is there, on that account, less demerit and turpitude in yesterday's offence. Penitence is only the feelings of an obedient heart, in view of its past delinquency. The only difference, therefore, between the repenting and unrepenting transgressor, is, that the disobedience in one case is continued longer than in the other. But the law, with equal clearness, denounces punishment against both.

By what has been said, this much at least, I conceive, has been made to appear, that there is not an obvious propriety in

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forgiving sin without atonement; and that, according to the best views, which we can entertain on the subject, it was necessary, if grace were exercised towards sinners, that such exercise of grace should be accompanied with some expression of the divine will and character, comporting with that expression, which is made in the divine law; something, which might prevent the subjects of God's moral government from imagining that his hatred of sin is less than his law represents.

A sentiment, similar to this, was found in the first edition of Dr. Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, clothed in that powerful language, which he had so much at his command. "If we consult," said he, "our natural sentiments, we are apt to fear, lest before the holiness of God, vice should appear more worthy of punishment, than the weakness and imperfection of human nature can ever seem to be of reward. Man, when about to appear before a Being of infinite perfection, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. In the presence of his fellow creatures, he may often justly elevate himself, and may often have reason to think highly of his own character and conduct, compared to the still greater imperfection of theirs. But the case is quite different, when about to appear before his infinite Creator. To such a Being, he can scarcely imagine, that his littleness and weakness should ever seem to be the proper object, either of esteem or reward. But he can easily conceive, how the numberless violations of duty, of which he has been guilty, should render him the object of aversion and punishment. Neither can he see any reason, why the divine indignation should not be let loose, without any restraint, upon so vile an insect, as he is sensible that he himself must appear to be. If he would still hope for happiness, he is conscious that he cannot demand it from the justice, but that he must entreat it from the mercy, of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition, at the thought of his past conduct, are, upon this account, the sentiments which become him, and seem to be the only means, which he has left for appeasing that wrath, which he knows he

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has justly provoked. He even distrusts the efficacy of all these, and naturally fears, lest the wisdom of God should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime, by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession, some other sacrifice, some other atonement, he imagines must be made for him, beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of the divine justice can be reconciled to his manifest offences."

In view of these considerations, and of the acknowledged fact that God does, in some way or other, pardon offenders, there is, to say the least, a degree of probability, that measures have been taken of the nature described.

I now ask your attention to an undeniable fact, viz. the death of Jesus Christ, by whom the worlds were made, and in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Judging from the language, both of the prophets and evangelists, it would seem that his sufferings, on this occasion, were unusual in their severity. The prophet Isaiah uses the following language: He was oppressed and afflicted: It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief.

In the twenty-second Psalm, are many passages, which are by no means applicable to David. To Christ, they apply with exactness; and this application is made by himself, and by the evangelists, who record his sufferings: They pierced my hands and my feet; they parted my garments, and cast lots upon my vesture. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? From the history which we have of our Saviour, it appears that he was, emphatically, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Immediately before his death, he is represented as passing through a scene of suffering, of which, on ordinary principles, no satisfactory account can be given. On the night of his crucifixion, when he had supped with his disciples, he withdrew from them, and kneeled down and prayed,

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saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. And there appeared unto him an angel, strengthening him. And, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. On this occasion, he said to his disciples: My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

Such extreme agitation of mind appears surprising, whether we consider, that Christ had from the beginning clearly foreseen his own death; or that many persons, both with the aids of religion and without them, have met death with less apparent depression.

Our Lord had, on many occasions, spoken of his own death, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem; he had even mentioned the manner, in which it should be effected: As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also shall the Son of man be lifted up.

Many persons, we know, among pagans, Jews, and Christians, have, with great fortitude, encountered severe sufferings. Not a few have manifested constancy in the midst of tortures. A Jewish mother, and her seven sons, suffered death, for their religion, in the time of Antiochus. To them was applied every species of torture, which could be invented by human malice and ingenuity. All these were insufficient to extort any expressions of perturbation, or even timidity. Stephen, in view of his execution, betrayed no symptoms of distress. Many of the early Christians rather courted than avoided martyrdom. Many protestants, in later ages, have anticipated the flames, and endured them, without the appearance of terror.

But, when our Saviour was in the garden of Gethsemane, he was at once depressed and agitated. No language can evince greater agitation, than the words already quoted from the evangelist: Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. What account is to be given of this extraordinary fact? Even those who deny the atonement of the Saviour, believe

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him to have been at least a great and good man, whom the Father honored with a high commission. Even if nothing more than this were true, it would be extremely difficult to give any rational account of the scene, which the evangelist describes. If there were nothing of an extraordinary nature, then, in the view of Christ; if his death were connected with nothing of more moment than the death of other prophets; especially if his sufferings were designed to afford a noble specimen of fortitude; it is strange, even to astonishment, that he should have manifested such unspeakable consternation. How came it to pass, that the greatest of all the prophets, who was emphatically styled the Son of God, should have suffered with less apparent magnanimity, than many of his predecessors? How came it, that He, who is head of the christian church, and who in all things hath the pre-eminence, did not manifest as little emotion, in view of the cross, as many of his disciples in subsequent ages? No person, I think, will consider this inquiry as unnatural or impertinent. Let us now suppose, that Christ suffered for human offences; and that the pains, which he endured, were to express the divine displeasure against sin; let us suppose, to use the prophet's language, that he made his soul an offering for sin, and that therefore it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief. On this ground, it will not appear incredible, that his sufferings should be incomparably greater, than any which had been previously endured. Nor is it strange, that such sufferings should have produced uncommon effects on our Saviour's animal system, and should have extorted from him corresponding expressions.

Let us now consider whether the death and sufferings of Christ, are not mentioned in Scripture, as answering most important purposes in the economy of redemption; and whether these are not represented as the ground on which the sinner receives forgiveness.

The prophet Isaiah uses the following language: He was wounded for our trangressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his

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stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. Unless the pains and death of our Lord were the ground on which, or the medium through which the sinner's pardon is obtained, what meaning had the prophet in saying, "he was wounded for our transgressions?" Christ is said to have suffered, "the just for the unjust; and to have given his life a ransom for many." Christians are said to be "redeemed by the blood of Christ." St. Paul says: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. In these words, let it be remarked, two things are specified; 1. An effect; 2. The manner in which this effect is produced. The effect is our "redemption from the curse of the law;" the manner is Christ's "being made a curse for us." By the curse of the law is evidently meant, the penalty or punishment, which the law denounceth. It is so explained by the apostle himself, when he says from the Pentateuch, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the law to do them. From this curse, this penalty, this punishment Christ has redeemed all who believe. In what way? By his efforts to reclaim their wanderings,—to bring them back to a virtuous life? This is, indeed, necessary to their salvation; but does this of itself redeem them from the curse of the law? By no means. The penalty once incurred, eternally remains due; and the penalty becomes due, whenever all things written in the law, are not performed. It is perfectly absurd, and will appear so, on a little reflection, to speak of future obedience, as procuring redemption from the curse of the law. But the apostle has, with perfect clearness, shown how this redemption is obtained; viz. by our Saviour's being made a curse for us; i. e. by his having endured that penalty of the law, in consequence of which we are set at liberty. The penalty of the law is an expression of God's displeasure at sin; this expression has been made by the sufferings of Christ.

The apostle John speaks of Christ, as "the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." In the preceding verse, he appears in a different char-

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acter; namely, that of an advocate: If any man sin, saith the sacred writer, we have an advocate with the Father. It is then subjoined: And he is the propitiation for our sins. In discharging the office of advocate, he proceeds on the ground of that propitiatory sacrifice, which he offered upon earth. The Father is besought to confer favors on men, in virtue of those sufferings which the Son endured at his crucifixion. "As the sacrifices of the Old Testament," says Dr. Whitby, "were slain, and the blood shed, before it was brought to the mercy seat, and yet the high priest made atonement with it, when, at his entrance into the holy place, he offered up that blood to God, in his peculiar presence; so, though our Lord was slain and shed his blood on earth, yet he may make atonement in the presence of God with it, by virtue of the sufferings which he endured, when his blood was shed."

We ought, by no means, to pass unnoticed the words, used by our Saviour, when he instituted the sacrament: This, saith he, speaking of the wine, is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

It would be easy to multiply passages of a similar nature. They are scattered in great profusion through the Scriptures, especially the New Testament. That the apparent meaning of these passages is such as to countenance and support the doctrine of atonement, will hardly be denied. It would be criminal and absurd, therefore, to seek a different interpretation, unless there is something in the doctrine itself, abhorrent from reason, or from other parts of inspired Scripture.

But I have endeavored to show, that reason is far from presenting obstacles to our belief in the doctrine, that the hypothesis of God's pardoning sins without any atonement, is liable to such objections, as reason is wholly unable to remove. It is, by consequence, so far from being true that previous improbability renders it necessary to seek some interpretation of these similar texts, different from that which is most obvious, that there is a strong presumption in its favor. Were these passages equally susceptible of two interpretations, one in favor of atonement

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the other having no relation to it, it is questionable whether any person, who had been habituated impartially and sedulously to contemplate the first principles of natural religion, would hesitate to adopt the former interpretation. How much less, when this interpretation is undeniably far more literal and obvious than any other. It must, I think, be conceded by those who deny the doctrine of atonement, that had it been the intention of the apostles to teach it, they could not easily have found language more to their purpose.

We will now briefly notice the remarks which are made to enfeeble or destroy the evidence hence arising.

I. That the death of Christ is called a sacrifice for sin, not because it really was such, but merely in accommodation to the prejudices of mankind, who, from the beginning of the world, expected pardon through the efficacy of sacrifice. By this it appears, that the general sentiment of mankind has been such, as we have conveyed; viz. that the repentance and amendment of life are not of themselves sufficient to procure forgiveness.

We will now attend to the objection, that the death of Christ is called a sacrifice for sin in accommodation to the prejudices which prevailed. This objection, you will observe, concedes to us that the language of Scripture is such, as to convey the ideas for which we contend; viz. that Christ died as a sacrifice for sin.

That he did die for this purpose, is either true, or it is not. The latter is what the objector designs to prove; but he allows, at the same time, that the writers of Scripture designed no such thing. They, to be sure, disbelieve the doctrine; but since mankind in general had a false belief concerning the efficacy of sacrifice, they not only forbore to oppose the error; but used such language, as was calculated to confirm it. The objection does not require nor deserve more particular examination.

II. Our Saviour is said to have been made a sacrifice for sin, it may be urged, not indeed with design to deceive, but in allu-

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sion to Jewish sacrifices. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, however, it has long since been observed, gives a very different account of the matter. He assures us, that the Mosaic phraseology was founded on the Levitical sacrifices being types, or prefigurations, of the sacrifice of Christ: The law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things. The priests, that offer gifts according to the law, serve under the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. The Levitical priesthood was a shadow of the priesthood of Christ, in like manner as the tabernacle, made by Moses, was according to that showed him in the mount.

The doctrine of this epistle, saith Butler, and after him M'Knight, plainly is, that the legal sacrifices were allusions to the great and final atonement, to be made by the blood of Christ; and not that this was in allusion to those. To support which, the following passages are pertinently cited: It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering, i. e. such as were made under the law, thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O God. By which will, we are sanctified, by the offering of the blood of Jesus once for all.

III. Though the death of Christ is called a sacrifice, other things, which are not literally so, it may be observed, are mentioned under that name. Good works are called sacrifices; and Christians are required to present themselves, as living sacrifices to God. But these are never represented as sacrifices for sin; nor are they ever mentioned in a manner which has the least tendency to lead men to regard them in this manner.

We are sometimes reminded of this passage, found in Colossians 1:24: I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church. By the afflictions of Christ, here mentioned, what must we understand? Surely not the sufferings which Christ endured; that were impossible. Evidently then, those sufferings in the

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cause of Christ, are meant, which were reserved for the apostle. These he was ready, cheerfully and bravely to encounter, for the sake of the church. It is by no means denied, that a man may die for the religion, or for the church, of Christ. This was actually done by St. Stephen. But it is not said of Stephen, or of any other merely human being, that he died for the sins of the world; that he was made a sin-offering; that he appeared to take away sin, by the sacrifice of himself; that he bore our sins in his own body. It is not said, that on Stephen, the Lord has laid the iniquities of us all; nor has any apostle thus judged, If St. Stephen died for all, then were all dead.

Though Christ is represented, in a great number of places, as a sacrifice for sin, the whole Scripture evidence of his atonement is far from depending on such representation. In many of the passages quoted, no allusion to the sacrifices of the Mosaic law is recognized. They would have an important meaning, and afford strong proof of the doctrine in question, even if the Mosaic ritual had never existed. The expressions are extremely various, but the ideas conveyed are the same, viz. that in consequence of the sufferings of Christ, the sins of all, who repent, are remitted.

IV. Some persons may tell us, that the reason why the Scriptures speak so often of our being saved by the death of Christ, is, that his death was incurred in discharging the duties of a ministry, undertaken for the promotion of present virtue, and future happiness. I answer, that the same may be said of Stephen, Paul, or of any of the christian martyrs. Yet it is not said of them, that they have washed us from our sins, in their own blood.

Lastly. You may imagine, perhaps, that the reason why so close a connexion is said, in Scripture, to exist between human salvation and the death of Christ, is, that by that event, his doctrines, all which are of a salutary tendency, have been confirmed. The reply, which has just been made to another remark, is applicable to this; for the martyrs as much confirmed their doctrines by suffering, as did our Saviour. Both, in the

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same way, evinced their integrity, their full belief in what they taught. But with regard to Christ, his death was, far less than his resurrection, a proof of his doctrines. The former proved his own belief; the latter proved that they received the Father's approbation. If either event, therefore, were on this account suitable to be mentioned very frequently, and very distinctly, as procuring the remission of sins, it was, beyond controversy, that of the resurrection. The fact is, not only that the language of Scripture is favorable to the doctrine of atonement; but will not without great violence admit a different explanation.

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LECTURE XXXV.

ATONEMENT.

WHATEVER wisdom there is in any constitution of government, such constitution may be liable to plausible objections. The number and speciousness of these objections may be greater in proportion, as those who make them are ignorant of all the ends, with reference to which the constitution was framed. A transient observer is not surprised, if in a complicated machine he sees some parts, the utility of which is not obvious. If he has confidence in the skill of the architect, it will not much perplex him, should he even observe some parts, or appendages, which have the appearance of retarding the great object for which the machine was constructed. But suppose that object were unknown to him, any objections which might occur against particular parts, would be of still less importance, perhaps even of none. And if this object is but partially understood, the force of his objections will be proportionally diminished.

I now proceed to notice some of those arguments, which are brought with most confidence against the doctrine of atonement.

1. If Christ, who was himself innocent, died to procure impunity for sinners, it is said to manifest an indifference to right and wrong. It is taking punishment from those who deserved it, and placing it on him who did not.

I answer, that whether the doctrine in question is true or

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false, facts, of the nature here mentioned, are daily occurring before our eyes. Men often suffer in consequence of actions in which they took no part, and to which they were not accessory. If a son, by disorderly living, involve himself in debt, his friends, to procure his relief, consent to make many sacrifices and endure many privations. If his extravagance has produced diseases which threaten death, they sedulously interpose their good offices to alleviate his pains, or to prevent dissolution. In these cases, we perceive nothing which is difficult to be reconciled with the justice of divine government. Because a parent chooses to intervene between his child and those sufferings or that infamy, to which the latter, by indiscretions or crimes has exposed himself, no person is ever led to suspect that the Sovereign of the universe is indifferent to right and wrong. In like manner, if an angel should choose to submit to some privations or positive pain with a view to alleviate the temporal sufferings of men, or meliorate the present condition of human society, it would enter the mind of no person, that the existence of such a fact was, in the smallest degree, discordant with divine impartiality and justice. But even were this matter attended with much difficulty, whatever mode of proceeding is adopted in one part of divine government, may doubtless be admitted into another. If, in that part of the divine economy which is known to us, the innocent endure anxiety and labor to relieve the guilty, we can by no means be sure, that the same does not take place in those parts which are unknown. It is perfectly absurd to say, that such a thing cannot be true, because it is inconsistent with the character of God, if there are other things in his government of a like nature. If, therefore, it is an obvious fact, that the sufferings of the rash and dissolute are relieved, or that such persons have health and comfort restored to them by the intervention of those who took no part in their crimes, how can a reasonable man deny that the salvation of sinners may be procured by the labors or sufferings of Messiah?

If this most benevolent and exalted being chose to divest

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himself of original glory, and to die the just for the unjust; is the divine character liable to impeachment, because nothing was done to prevent or discourage the measure?

Besides: It is a fact, as we have before observed, that Jesus Christ did suffer. He suffered then either for himself, or for others, or for nothing. That he suffered for personal crimes, will not be asserted by any one, who believes his religion. That he suffered for nothing, is a proposition which will as readily be rejected. There is but one alternative: He suffered on account of others.

The person objecting, will perhaps, be willing to allow this. Those who disbelieve the doctrine of atonement, do not deny, that in some general sense, Christ suffered for the advantage of men. They are not unwilling to admit, that Christ died to confirm his doctrines, and that these doctrines are calculated to promote virtue and happiness. Now, though we endeavored in preceding lectures to show, that Christ died, not only that men might be brought to virtue and repentance; but to render it consonant with the wise government of Jehovah to accept their penitence, yet the objection under consideration lies with no greater strength, against the last opinion, than against the other. Suppose for a moment, that our own opinion is wrong, and the other is right. Suppose, that Christ died for no other purpose, than to confirm his religion; which religion is designed to bring men to virtue, and thus prepare them for glory. It will still be true, even by the concession of those who hold this opinion, that Christ died for the guilty; an innocent person suffered, that the guilty might not suffer, which is precisely the thing objected against the doctrine of atonement, as showing a manifest indifference to right and wrong. It is no more true on one supposition than on the other, that punishment is taken from those who deserve it, and placed on him who did not. Can you possibly discern any difference? As to the sufferings of Christ, there is none; nor is there any as to his innocence. It is undeniable on either supposition, that an innocent person suffered. Nor can it be denied, that these sufferings were endured on ac-

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count of the guilty. For, had not men been sinners, a religion sealed, or confirmed by the death of Christ, would not have been necessary to their reformation. If an infidel brings the objection, with design to discredit the christian religion, I answer it, by saying first, the thing objected to, is analogous to facts, constantly existing under the government of God; and, therefore, the objection no more proves, that Christianity is not from God than that the system of nature and the government of the world are not from Him. I observe secondly, that the objection has no weight, because the sufferings of Christ were not a matter of constraint, but of choice. But if a believer in Christianity brings the objection, we are no more concerned in its removal, than he; and, therefore, it is absurd for him to attempt to subvert, by such means, the doctrine in question.

Varying the objection a little, it may be said, that every accountable creature ought to be treated according to his deserts; and that the suffering of one innocent being, in place of many offenders is inconsistent with this. I answer; It is no more inconsistent with this, than with the exercise of mercy in general. It is implied in the idea of mercy, that he, who is the subject of it, is not treated as severely, as he deserves. If that which is asserted in the objection is true, I apprehend it fixes the doom of our whole guilty race. That they have sinned, is incontrovertible. If they must be treated according to their desert, they must endure the penalties of a violated law.

Should any reply be made to this, it must be, that human offences do not deserve punishment; or that obedience in one instance, makes amends for disobedience in others. I rejoin, that both these propositions are contradictory to the divine law.

1. Were it true that human offences do not deserve punishment, the divine law is calculated to deceive mankind by threatening a punishment, which cannot, without injustice, be inflicted; for it would be unjust to punish sin, if such punishment is unmerited. Nor is this all. If what is here asserted, is true, either the law misrepresents the divine character, or that character itself is wanting in moral purity. Nearly the same con-

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sequences will result from the other suggestion, viz. that obedience in one instance makes amends for disobedience in others. This, no less than the other opinion, is contradictory to the law of God, nor can any rule of rectitude be conceived, with which this suggestion may be reconciled.

2. It is objected, that the doctrine of atonement is not consistent with our best ideas of divine mercy; for if God has received compensation for the offences of men, his not exacting punishment from them is no indication of compassion or liberality.

If it were correct to represent the sacrifice of Christ, as perfectly analogous to the payment of a debt; and that this measure originated with Christ, and not with the Father, the objection, perhaps, could not easily be removed; for when a debt is paid, he, to whom it was owed, has no further demands, and gratitude seems exclusively due to him by whom the payment was made.

But this representation is not sanctioned by the Scriptures. They speak of the Father, as originating the constitution of grace; and they describe the atonement as that through the medium of which grace is so exercised, that the sinner's pardon may be accompanied with a declaration of the divine displeasure against sin; that God may be just, and the justifier of him that believeth. Now, it can surely derogate nothing from the riches of divine liberality, that in the manner of exercising it, wisdom is employed, and precautions are taken to prevent abuse. It were strange, indeed, if the generosity of a prince must be questioned, because it is not an unqualified, random generosity, but exhibited in company with discretion and foresight.

But the fact is, that the atonement of Christ is not only consistent with liberality on the part of God, but serves eminently to display such liberality.

So far as the justice of divine requirements is questionable, it is equally questionable whether any favor is shown to those who are not punished for violating such requirements.

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But should the transgressors of law be pardoned on the sole condition of repentance; especially if it were done frequently, suspicions would be entertained, that a perception of undue severity in the law was the real occasion of this lenity. Whatever, therefore, tends to show the justice of divine requirements; whatever tends to magnify the law and make it honorable, tends, in the same degree, to exhibit and illustrate the liberality of God, in pardoning those by whom its requirements have been violated. The pardon of every penitent is virtually attended with a declaration, both on the part of God and man, that the divine commands are holy and just. The penitent himself makes this declaration, by believing on him "who died the just for the unjust." The Deity makes this declaration by accepting his penitence exclusively on the ground of our Lord's interposition. Indeed, the language of the transaction and the language of the divine law, unite perfectly in this; viz. to express the sentiments of Deity as to moral evil. According to the opinions of those who reject the doctrine of atonement, there were no obstacles to the exercise of divine mercy. Whereas, according to the sentiment which we endeavor to establish, these obstacles were such as to require for their removal, the intervention of the Son of God.

To pardon sinners, where there was nothing to render the measure difficult, is obviously a less display of generosity, than to pardon them, when the removal of great obstacles was previously required. The doctrine in question, therefore, far from depressing, tends directly to raise our ideas of divine liberality.

Facts, it is believed, well correspond with this reasoning. The strongest expressions of personal demerit and the most lively views of our Creator's benignity and grace, are not found among those, who, considering repentance alone as the ground of pardon, reject the opinions for which we contend.

3. It is further said, in opposition to the doctrine of atonement, that were it true, it would have been revealed in the Jewish Scriptures.

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Without conceding that the Jewish Scriptures are silent as to this subject, I observe, that were they entirely so, it would prove neither that the doctrine is false nor unimportant. We are far from being judges, how many subjects will be elucidated by a divine revelation. The works of nature are as truly a communication from God, as are the Jewish Scriptures. Yet in this communication, many subjects of acknowledged moment, are left in perfect uncertainty. Now, suppose that further light is to be imparted by immediate revelation, who could predict what portion of the darkness, remaining after the first communication, would by this be removed?

The objection is susceptible of another answer. In the writings of Moses, I mean the first five books of Scripture, nothing is distinctly said as to the doctrine of a future state. Let them be subjected to the most scrupulous examination, this doctrine will not there find direct and prominent evidence to support it. But is the doctrine of a future state either untrue or unimportant? Is it not generally considered as lying at the very foundation of all religion? Now if God was pleased to make a revelation, of which this doctrine was no part, with what confidence can we infer either the falsity or insignificance of any other doctrine, because it makes no part of this revelation?

But even in the four gospels, it is objected, that much less is said of atonement, than we should be justified in expecting, if the doctrine held so important a place in the christian system, as is commonly supposed.

I answer, that no two persons, it is probable, would be agreed as to the precise measure of perspicuity, with which it was to be expected, that such a doctrine, if true, would be revealed.

We should have judged beforehand, with entire confidence, that the soul's immortality and a future world, would occupy a conspicuous place in the Mosaic revelation. The observations which have been made, apply more forcibly to the objection, in its present form, than in that which it previously assumed; for it is not pretended that the gospels are silent as to Christ's

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suffering for the sins of the world; but only, that the subject is not treated so copiously, nor placed in so clear a light, as it would have been, were it a truth so important as Christians have generally believed.

The fact is, that our Lord did teach the doctrine of his atonement; and his instructions on this subject seem liable to no charge of peculiar obscurity, as will appear from the following passages: I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This spake he, signifying what death he should die. The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

We are, by no means, bound to show why our Lord did not mention the subject more frequently. It is enough if the doctrine were really taught by him. But no words can be more clear on this subject, than those last quoted. In addition to this, let it be considered, that the apostles who received their commission immediately from Christ, were abundant in the use of similar language.

We are sometimes told, that this doctrine, if true, and so important, as many represent, would have been taught by the apostles when they introduced Christianity to the heathen, among the first principles.

I answer, that while the writings of the apostles so much abound in passages, representing Christ's blood, as the price of our redemption;—representing him as a sin-offering;—as taking away sins by the sacrifice of himself;—as dying the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; it is preposterous to argue, that they did not believe both in the truth and importance of the doctrine of atonement, because in some short speeches, which they were called to make on peculiar emergencies, this doctrine is not distinctly taught.

But whether it did not occupy a place in their preaching, among the first principles of Christianity, is a matter which Paul himself has decided. Writing to the Corinthians, he

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says: For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Now, we have no reason to doubt that St. Paul preached at Corinth in the same manner in which he preached at other places. The sufferings of Christ were no more important to the Corinthians than to the Ephesians, Philippians, or Colossians. We are to suppose, therefore, that the apostle delivered to them first of all, "how Christ died for our sins." Nor did any of the apostles know, better than Paul, what doctrines ought to be preached. There were the same reasons, why they should consider it a fundamental doctrine, as why he should so consider it. Can we doubt that it was so considered by Peter, who said: Ye are not redeemed from your vain conversation with corruptible things, such as silver and gold; but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot? Can we doubt that it was so considered by St. John, who exclaimed: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us; and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins? And again: He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only; but for the sins of the whole world? The objection is not only destitute of weight; it does not possess plausibility.

I shall now say a few things as to the character of Him, by whom the atonement was made. Could it have been known to creatures whose intellectual powers are so feeble as ours, previously to the event, that atonement was about to be made for sin by the sufferings of an innocent person, they would, I apprehend, have been quite unable to determine any thing, as to the dignity of the person by whom these sufferings were to be endured. Yet, so far as we can judge, they would have thought it probable, that some illustrious being would be thus employed. Such an one would seem less inadequate than others to so great and extraordinary an undertaking. We cannot depend, however, on any reasonings *a priori*; but must form our conclusions, wholly from the declarations of Scripture.

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This testimony is, that in Jesus Christ, "dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" that Jesus Christ "is over all, God blessed forevermore." Of him it has been said: Thou, Lord, hast in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. As it is not possible for Deity to suffer; and as our Saviour said many things of himself which can be predicated only of created nature, we are led to believe that eternal Deity and created nature were, in a mysterious manner, united in the character of Jesus Christ. Unless there had been some important reason for it, we cannot suppose that this union would have taken place. We must conclude, therefore, that such union was necessary to the great work which our Saviour accomplished.

I close this lecture with a very few remarks.

1. I desire you to reflect and to feel that the subject is of general interest. You are not to imagine, that disquisitions of this nature belong exclusively to instructors in theology. So far from it, they are of no consequence to them, unless they are so to you. There are many things, which are peculiar to men of particular ages and professions. But depravity, is what all men hold in common. Without mercy, therefore, we must all perish. If a Redeemer died for human offences, he died for you; and the divine law will be honored either by your suffering the penalty, or by your acceding to those terms, on which, through Christ Jesus, a free remission is offered.

2. The doctrine we have been discussing, is calculated to raise our ideas of the importance of man. The degrees of pleasure and pain, of which we are now susceptible, are not, indeed, inconsiderable. In what measure our capacities for either may hereafter be enlarged, we are unable to determine. But unless the whole sum of misery, or enjoyment, reserved for each human soul, were exceedingly great, we can hardly imagine that the Son of God would have been offered up as a propitiatory sacrifice.

3. Having already had occasion to observe how much the doctrine which we have been considering, tends to exalt our views

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of the riches of divine grace, I shall only subjoin, that it tends no less to display the moral turpitude of sin. God, though almighty and omniscient, having a perfect knowledge of the universe, and having all means at his command, could devise no method less expensive, in which to exercise mercy. How malignant the nature of sin, if pardon could be offered on no easier terms; and with how much vigilance should we guard against that, which thus tends to spread dishonor, injury, confusion, and pain, through the empire of God!

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LECTURE XXXVI.

REGENERATION.

Among those who believe Christianity, there is no inconsiderable discrepance of opinion as to the doctrine of regeneration. Perhaps, from this circumstance, you have been led to conclude, either that the passages, which are thought to support this doctrine, are unimportant, or that they have a meaning, so evanescent and subtile, as to elude investigation.

I am persuaded, however, that you cannot, on reflection, be wholly satisfied with this conclusion. There are questions without number, concerning medicine, philosophy, commerce, philology, and politics, which, after being severely examined, have by different men, been variously answered. No person hence infers, that these questions are of no moment. Nor can it be rationally supposed that our Saviour, when acknowledged by Nicodemus and applied to as a teacher sent from God, would have amused the applicant with some unimportant or subtile speculation; less still, that he would with much solemnity, have made a reply, which meant nothing.

There is another point of view, in which you will perceive strong reasons for coming to some conclusion on this subject. If it should be found, after sufficient scrutiny, that the doctrine mentioned, has nothing in it of high import, you will be secured from that damp which the mention of it has, I doubt not, occasionally thrown upon your spirits. But if, on the contrary, it should appear that the opinion which has commonly prevailed on the subject, is substantially correct, and a radical change in

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the human character is indispensable to salvation, you cannot need to be informed how much it is for your interest, not only to view the doctrine in a clear light, but likewise to experience that transformation which it implies.

When this and other theological subjects are discussed, let it be remembered that I ask you to take nothing merely on my assertion. Opinions in divinity, let them come from whom they may, if not supported by reason, Scripture, or both, are not entitled to your belief.

But while it is conceded to be irrational, absurd, and dangerous to believe without evidence; it is not less so to withhold assent, when sufficient evidence is afforded. A man who should deny the existence of such rivers as the Nile, and the Danube, because he had not seen them, would act in a manner as little becoming a rational creature, as he who should heed the vagaries of every fanatic.

Whatever is the meaning of regeneration, that much is said of it in the Scriptures, cannot be denied.

When a ruler of the Jews, convinced by miracles that Jesus was Messiah, came to receive instruction, Jesus said to him: Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Those who believe on the name of Christ, are said by the evangelist, to be "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Those to whom St. Peter wrote, are said to have "purified their souls by obeying the truth, through the Spirit: and to be born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." It is asserted in the first epistle of John, 2: 29: He that doeth righteousness is born of God. Again: Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not. And further: Whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world.

There are many other places, in which different words are used; but where the thing intended is evidently the same: If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; and all things have become new. Christians are said to be "created in Christ Jesus, unto good works;" and

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they, who love Christians, because they are such, are said to "have passed from death unto life."

The passages quoted, have doubtless, some import. To suppose that our Saviour spake, and his apostles wrote, without meaning, would be a reproach to them, than which a greater can scarcely be conceived.

We can think of no more direct way of ascertaining this import, than to consider what stands in connexion with the term in question.

I. In the passage cited from John iii, regeneration is connected with "seeing the kingdom of God." This phrase, "kingdom of God," it must be allowed, is sometimes used to signify Christianity itself, or the christian church. And, while we consider the expression merely, we are not at liberty to assert, that such may not be its meaning in this place.

II. St. Peter connects regeneration with "obeying the truth through the Spirit." Obeying the truth is synonymous with obeying the commands of God, or maintaining a holy life. In this he accords with St. John, who asserts, in passages already noticed, that "he, who doeth righteousness, is born of God; and that he who is born of God, sinneth not."

III. Regeneration is connected with victory over the world: He, that is born of God, overcometh the world.

IV. Regeneration is connected, as effect and cause, with the influence of the Holy Spirit. By a regenerate person, our Saviour evidently means "every one that is born of the Spirit."

V. Regeneration is connected with eternal life: The righteous, says our Saviour, shall go away into life eternal. Now, "the righteous," by St. John's definition, "is he, that doeth righteousness: and he that doeth righteousness," according to the passage already cited, "is born of God."

The way is now prepared for inquiring more directly into the nature of that change, which is implied in regeneration.

1. Does this term express nothing more, than a transition from paganism or Judaism to the profession of Christianity?

This was, indeed, no inconsiderable change. "It was," to

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use the words of a late interesting writer, "a new name, a new language, a new society, a new faith, a new hope, a new object of worship, a new rule of life; a history was disclosed, full of discovery and surprise; a prospect of futurity was unfolded, beyond imagination awful and august. The same description applies in a great part, though not entirely, to the conversion of a Jew."

This was so remarkable a period in a man's life, such a revolution of every thing that was important to him, as might, according to the opinion of some, even though no moral change were implied, admit those strong figures, and significant allusions, by which it is described in Scripture: It was a regeneration, a new creature, a translation from the condition of slaves to that of sons; it was to be born again of God and the Spirit.

I acknowledge that part of these figurative terms might have been used, had the change contemplated been no greater than is here supposed; though others, I think, could not.

It is a maxim, that two things, which have not similar relations to a third, are not similar. Let us examine, then, whether such a change, as is here described, has the same relation, which regeneration has to other objects.

Regeneration, we have seen, is connected with obedience to the commands of God,—with the doing of righteousness. Whatever change, therefore, is not connected with the doing of righteousness, is not regeneration. But a transition from paganism or Judaism, to a profession of Christianity does not necessarily imply obedience, or the doing of righteousness. Witness Judas Iscariot and Simon the sorcerer; witness many Gentile converts, who in times of persecution reverted to paganism, and to prove themselves real apostates, execrated the Lord who bought them.

But even could no examples be named, it would hardly be asserted, I think, that merely a profession of Christianity, whether the person making it, had been Jew or pagan, is the same thing as the doing of righteousness, or obedience to the truth. Men of all descriptions, whether the friends or the ene-

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mies of religion, are ready to acknowledge, that obedience does not always accompany a good profession.

Again, for the same reason, that obedience and regeneration are connected, the latter is connected with eternal life. No change, therefore, which does not ensure eternal life, is regeneration. But the abandonment of either the pagan or the Jewish religion for a profession of Christianity, gives no such security. Many shall say unto Christ in the great day: Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works; to whom he shall answer, saying: I know you not, whence ye are: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

St. Peter speaks of some christian professors, whose lives were marked by fraud and voluptuousness. What profit to them that they had abandoned heathen ceremonies, heathen temples, and heathen gods? What profit to them, that they had been joined to a new society; that they had acknowledged a new faith, a new rule of life, and a new object of worship? So far were these circumstances from securing their salvation, they did not even leave their danger unaltered. In consequence of the change which had taken place in their external condition, their character became more criminal, and their danger more imminent. This follows from a principle, repeatedly taught by our Saviour, namely, that the criminality of unbelief is proportionable to the light resisted: If I had not come, and done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. The cities, which were made the theatre of his mighty works, are represented as incurring a more intolerable doom, than the most abandoned of those, whose ignorance was greater.

Should it be objected here, that our Saviour, in the passages cited, is speaking of unbelief or a rejection of Christianity, and not of those, who had embraced it, I should answer, if it be so highly criminal to withhold belief, when evidence is exhibited, it cannot be less criminal to withhold obedience in opposition to those motives, which this evidence affords. The unreclaimed

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professor of Christianity was, therefore, more offensive to God, and less qualified for his kingdom of glory, than he was while a pagan; before that change in his external circumstances had been produced, which some persons are so willing to denominate regeneration.

2. Is the term regeneration designed to express intellectual improvement, or enlargement of intellectual powers? To determine this, we must, as before, consider whether both these have the same relations. Were the intellect of a sinner enlarged, or more highly cultivated, would he certainly obey the truth, and work righteousness? or would he certainly partake in a joyful retribution? for both these, we have seen, are connected with that change, which is produced in the character of the regenerate. Of such it is likewise said, that they overcome the world. Now, it is extremely evident, that moral attainments are by no means proportionate either to the native powers of the mind, or to the cultivation bestowed on them. Many individuals of piercing intellect, of profound erudition, and much theoretical knowledge of Christian theology, have been openly and flagrantly dissolute in their lives; and therefore eminently exposed to the indignation of Heaven. Instead of obeying the truth, they have either denied or disgraced it. Instead of overcoming the world, they have habitually and without a struggle, endured its bondage.

3. Does regeneration mean simply an external reformation in morals? That many have need of such a change, will be generally and readily acknowledged. The volatile should become sedate; the fraudulent, honest; the indolent, industrious; the discontented should become quiet; the profane must alter their language; and the intemperate abandon the inebriating draught.

All this is well; but is this all, which is implied in overcoming the world? Is nothing more than this, comprehended in a holy life? Is this to be born of God and his Spirit? Is the saint's inheritance, the crown of life, made sure to all who possess the character, implied in such a reformation? The young

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nobleman, whose application to Christ is recorded in the Gospel, appears not, in the particulars mentioned, to have needéd reforming; and, therefore, must have been, at least, as well qualified for a future state of reward, as any in whom such a reformation merely has been produced. Yet this person was not fit for the kingdom of God; he had not that character, which was connected with eternal life; he was, therefore, not regenerate.

But you will ask, perhaps with some ardor, if to be born again, does not mean reformation, what import has the phrase; and what value can be attached to the thing itself?

I answer, that reformation, where the character has been previously immoral, is without question, comprehended in that change, which is called a new birth; all, which I assert, is, that external reformation does not necessarily imply that change.

Should a person who has for a long time been your open enemy, become your friend, he would doubtless alter his language. But barely an alteration in his language, and even an alteration in his general treatment of you, would not amount to that which is implied in his becoming your friend. External actions, in themselves considered, are nothing but organical motions. There is neither friendship nor enmity, in the cast of the eyes; in the motion of the tongue, the hands or the feet. These motions are important only, as the indications of a friendly, or an unfriendly disposition. And the very same external acts are, under different circumstances, and with regard to different persons, an indication of opposite qualities. The kiss, by which Judas saluted Christ, was a proof of deadly hatred; though in a similar way parents often express their tender affection.

Suppose now, that a person, heretofore immoral, becomes industrious, sober, and circumspect. This is, indeed, what would have taken place, had there been a change of disposition; but it is what may take place, where there has been no such change. At all events, the two things are as perfectly distinct, as ideas in the mind are distinct from sound, or from

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characters, inscribed on marble, or parchment. Yet no person, who means to speak with accuracy, would identify a book or letter, with the moral character of its author. The book or the letter is one thing; his moral character is another. Nor is the difference less between external amendment and moral feelings. Yet nothing is certainly connected with eternal life, but rectitude of moral feelings; and it has been shown, that regeneration is connected with eternal life. Therefore, external amendment and regeneration are not the same.

We have now proved, that neither external amendment, nor the increase or cultivation of the intellectual powers, nor a transition from Judaism or paganism to a profession of Christianity, is regeneration. What then must this term imply? Must it not imply a change of heart, or, if you please, a change of temper or disposition?

We will now attend more particularly to the conference, which our Saviour had with Nicodemus. The history is this: There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus, evidently supposing our Lord meant a natural birth, saith: How can a man be born, when he is old? Jesus explains himself: Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That, which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. The wind bloweth were it listeth; and thou hearest the sound thereof; but thou canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered, How can these things be? Jesus answered, Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?

On these words I repeat a remark, already made, viz. that this language must have some meaning; and further, that this

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meaning ought to have been known to the Jewish instructors. Christ considered it as a reproach to Nicodemus, that the latter did not understand what these things meant.

From Selden, as quoted by Whitby, it appears, that proselytes to the Jewish religion were considered as children new born. This might be be said, either on account of the great change of circumstances and relations, implied in passing from paganism into the Jewish church; or on account of a correspondent moral change, which the proselyte was supposed to experience. That our Saviour could not have meant the former, will be evident from a little reflection. To what purpose would it have been for Nicodemus to be told, that the difference was great between the external circumstances of a pagan and those of a Jew? The Jews were so far from needing to be informed of this, that they boasted of this difference, and of their consequent superiority.

Suppose now, that our Lord had no reference to that change in external circumstances, implied in passing from paganism into the Jewish church; but the change, implied in passing from the Jewish into the christian church. Against this opinion, in addition to the reasons already suggested, there are the following in particular.

1. It was by no means our Saviour's method to display in striking colors the difference between the external profession of his religion, and the same profession of Judaism.

2. If such were our Saviour's design, we can see little or no meaning, that can be attached to the term Spirit, in the following passage: That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit; nor can we perceive any import in the comparison which he used: Thou hearest the sound of the wind; but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one, that is born of the Spirit.

It is likewise scarcely possible, I think, that Nicodemus should have expressed so great astonishment, as he continued to express, had our Saviour meant nothing more than that persons

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under the Messiah's reign, would enjoy light, and be placed in circumstances, different from those previously existing.

Let us now suppose, that when the Jews spoke of a proselyte to their religion, as a child new born, the more intelligent and devout of them understood a moral change, corresponding with that which was external; or that both were comprehended in the same expression. In support of this supposition, we have the authority of Michaelis, who tells us, that "to be born again in the language of the Rabbins, signified to be accepted of God, as a son of Abraham, and, by following the example of his faith, to become worthy of that title." They, who hold this opinion, must have thought, as did the apostle, that "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Supposing our Saviour discoursed of a moral change, a renovation of the heart, the whole conference will be quite intelligible.

1. Such a change is represented in other parts of Scripture, already cited, as necessary to eternal life, or an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

2. As the meaning conveyed is vastly more important on that supposition, than on any other, we more easily see why so strong a figure should be used. For a bad man to become a good one, is a much greater alteration, than that which is made in changing from one profession or community to another.

3. As there are, in this life, those whom the Scriptures denominate ungodly, and those, whom they term righteous; punishment being reserved for the one, and reward for the other, conversion from sin to piety must be of all things most important. It was, therefore, perfectly natural, that Jesus Christ should have introduced this subject to one, by whom he was acknowledged as a teacher sent from God.

4. This change of moral feelings,—this melioration of char-

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acter, is, with much frequency, in the Scriptures, attributed to divine agency; and therefore, what our Lord says of being born of the Spirit, and being born from above, is perfectly intelligible.

Lastly. The supposition, now adopted, justifies the reproof received by Nicodemus from our Saviour: Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things? Terms were used among them, we have seen, which expressed a change of character,—a melioration of heart. And if the highest import of these terms were not discerned by those who used them, namely, by the Jewish doctors, it must have proceeded from a criminal inattention to their own Scriptures; for in these we find numerous passages, in which such a change, and the influence of God in producing it, are unequivocally recognized. Such were the words of Moses: The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Such were the words of the royal psalmist: Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Of a similar import were the divine promises, communicated by the mouth of the prophets: I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They shall return unto me with all their heart. This is the covenant, that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.

All that we have attempted as yet to prove, you will observe, is, that regeneration implies a moral change. The subject in general is reserved for further discussion.

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LECTURE XXXVII.

REGENERATION.

It having been already shown that the change implied in regeneration is of a moral nature, we are interested to ascertain who they are, for whom it is necessary.

I. That heathen were of this number, will probably be conceded without reluctance. Concerning the moral state of the pagan world in general when Christianity was introduced, there can be but one opinion. The same testimony is given by historians, poets, and the inspired writers. The Gentiles were not indeed without religion; but theirs was such a religion as imposed little or no restraint on the passions and vices of men; nor could it be otherwise, considering the character of those beings whom they worshipped as God;—beings, by whose quarrels the heavens were perpetually disturbed, and by whose impurities the earth was polluted.

To describe pagan profligacy in the words of their own satirists would be highly indecorous. We will use the less offensive language of St. Paul. "As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, he gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which were not convenient: being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of murder, debate, deceit, malignity; backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things,

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disobedient to parents, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgments of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them, that do them."

That all to whom this language applies, have need of being transformed, of being created anew, is a truth which will find little opposition, either from the understanding or the prejudices of any. In view of this subject, no one is surprised at the language of the apostle's commission, when sent among the Gentiles; "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Here, it is believed by many, may be found a satisfactory explanation of those strongly figurative passages of Scripture, by which a change of character is expressed. What wonder, it may be asked, if persons, thus irrational in all religious sentiments, ignorant of God and degraded by vice, should be told: that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things have passed away and all things have become new? What wonder, that such sinners were said to possess a carnal mind; and to be dead in trespasses and sins; and that those who reformed their lives agreeably to the precepts of Christian morality, were said to be quickened, i. e. raised from the dead?

I answer, that in all this there is no cause of wonder. I grant too, that some of these expressions do appear to refer especially to converts from paganism. Such persons were in a peculiar sense, new creatures. That change of disposition, produced in them, was accompanied by an alteration in externals, far more striking, than usually attends conversion in a christian country. Certain descriptions of the change produced in Gentiles, by their reception of Christ into their hearts, when applied to the regeneration of those, who have from their youth been instructed in Christianity, and decently restrained by its moral precepts, have not precisely their original applicability.

But let us inquire, for a moment, in what that change principally consisted, which qualified a Gentile for salvation. Agreeably to what was shown in the last lecture, it could not

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have consisted in the great accession of light, which was conveyed to his intellect. This had, in truth, no connexion with salvation further, than as it tended either to produce or cherish, correct moral dispositions. In the production of these, and not in the augmentation of light, principally consisted regeneration, when pagans were the subjects. Not only were they not conformed in sentiment to the age in which they lived, but were renewed in the spirit of their minds. It is, therefore, evident,

II. That all, whose moral state is no better, have need of a change substantially the same. A proposition so clearly resulting from undeniable premises, you will, I presume, feel no unwillingness to admit. Should you make it a question, whether there are in christian countries, any whose moral character and feelings are no better than were the heathen in general, the matter may, without much difficulty be decided.

Though the general standard of morals is doubtless, much higher in countries where revelation is enjoyed, than among pagans, either of ancient or modern times, (and this circumstance will render the same practices more criminal in the one case than in the other,) there are few, very few heathen crimes, which have not been occasionally perpetrated in christian countries. There are not a few individuals, it should seem, therefore, whose external deportment affords no contrast, when compared with that of pagan profligates. But the same degree of external profligacy is by no means necessary to prove the same depravity of heart. Where the relations of man to his Maker, and the duties thence resulting are well understood, men cannot sin with so little danger and so little crime, as where, through the want of instruction, all the common sentiments on morality are uncertain, perplexed and inconsistent. There may be very many among us, therefore, externally practising none of those vices for which the Gentiles were infamous; and yet, in the divine estimation, no less guilty than they. This appears evident from that declaration of our Saviour which we have once mentioned, concerning the cities, where his miraculous power was exerted, and his preaching enjoyed. It cannot be sup-

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posed, that their immoralities surpassed those of Sodom and Gomorrah; yet it is declared, that the punishment of the latter in the final judgment, will be less severe.

It follows then, that if a moral change were so necessary for Gentiles, that without it they could not be saved; the same change is equally necessary not only for those among ourselves who emulate pagan crimes, but for many, in whose deportment there is far more decency.

Further, it is no uncommon thing for persons to betray, on particular occasions, a baseness of disposition, which, during the whole course of their past lives, had lain concealed, and which, but for those occasions would never have been discovered. It is by no means certain, therefore, but that some, whose lives are marked by no striking disorder, possess a degree of depravity not inferior to that of pagans.

III. Without making any comparison between the state of morals among nominal Christians, and those who are ignorant of revelation, it will be allowed, I suppose, that all who live in habitual violations of Christian precepts, have need of a new disposition, i. e. of a renewed heart: Know ye not, saith the apostle, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Those, who practise falsehood, and are accustomed to profane language, may without question, be added to the number.

Does it not already appear, that the necessity of regeneration is not confined to a few? Are the sins now mentioned, the exclusive opprobium of the heathen world? Are impure and profane persons so rare, as to excite wonder? Is the use of oaths an offence, as novel or singular, as it is revolting to every virtuous mind, and offensive to God? Are intemperance and reviling, covetousness and extortion, crimes which are heard of but a few times, in one's whole life? Yet the Scriptures assure us, that any one of these vices designates its votaries, as unregenerate; as unfit for the kingdom of God.

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IV. The change contemplated is necessary for all on whose minds religious considerations make no deep nor habitual impression.

When we revolve in our minds the principles and discoveries of revealed religion; that there is a God whose power created and sustains the universe,—that this being has goodness, wisdom and justice equal to his power,—that, as he had design in the structure of every leaf, and of every pebble, much rather had he design in the formation of human souls,—that he has declared his purpose of eternally supporting every human soul to which existence is given, and of treating all, through an endless succession of ages, agreeably to the moral qualities, which they possess on earth; when we consider that the Son of God, agreeably to a series of prophecy, extending through the space of four thousand years, descended from heaven to enlighten and reform the world, and to make atonement for sin,—that this glorious personage will pass judgment on our race, assigning to the righteous and the wicked, rewards and punishments, which have neither intermission nor end;—when we reflect that these things are generally believed, or at least, are not denied after any serious investigation, it will appear that levity or inattention to religion, evinces a state of heart, not radically different from theirs, whose conduct is decidedly immoral. It is easy, I well know, to apply the epithet innocent to a heedless life and heedless actions; but the application is as little justified by reason, as it is by the unchangeable oracles of God. Can we be innocent in treating with indifference that message, which the only wise God deemed of sufficient import to justify the mission of his Son from heaven? Have the Creator's wisdom and goodness and power, been employed from the period of original apostasy unto the present day, in forming and executing the scheme of redemption; and does it imply no criminality in those, for whom this redemption was intended, to live a gay, a vacant or unmeaning life, as if time were their only existence, and earth their only theatre? Were an ambassador sent on business which involved the prosperity and the very be-

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ing of the state from which he was sent, to spend the time assigned him in low pursuits or trifling amusements, regardless of the objects entrusted to him, would it be a valid defence, to plead that he had violated no laws, that he had excited no rebellion, that he had formed no designs against the State? Allowing this to be true, would he deserve to escape punishment? Yet the interests of one immortal spirit are evidently greater, than the political interests of a State, or of the whole world.

V. Regeneration is a change necessary for all those who are incapable of enjoying the kingdom of God.

Though all sensitive beings are susceptible of happiness from some source or other, they are not all susceptible of it from the same sources. The same employment which is grateful to one, is to another wearisome and disgusting. The same state of the atmosphere which invigorates one animal body, is attended in regard to another with torpor, pain and death. Some cannot live in the air, while others die without it. The fishes of the sea would writhe in agonies on fields of grass, in gardens of fruit, or citron-groves; while quadrupeds would exult on the one, and human beings be regaled by the other.

To confine ourselves to our own species, how diverse and even opposite, are the sources of human enjoyment. To some military men, no life seems worth possessing but that of the camp or the field; other persons as ardently love the ocean. By most people, both these are equally dreaded. A statesman inured to political discussion and habitually warmed either by success or opposition, takes no pleasure in the society of those who are absorbed in mathematical or moral inquiries; while the latter can think of no subjects, on which the mind fixes itself with so much readiness and satisfaction.

To be susceptible of happiness from any object or employment, a taste for that object or employment is requisite. Now, all the happiness which will be enjoyed by human beings after death, will result from the same society and the same employments. The society will consist of just men made perfect, of angels, of Jesus the mediator, and of God the judge of all. The

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employment will be contemplation of the divine character, as displayed in the works and purposes of God; from these will naturally result thanksgiving and adoration. All therefore, to whose happiness such society and such employments would not contribute, are incapable of seeing, i. e. of enjoying the kingdom of God. It is evident then, that all such persons have need of a moral change, or in other words, of being renewed in the spirit of their minds. I request you to consider whether there can be any fallacy in this argument; whether the case be not as plain as any which can be proposed for human consideration. For my own part, I know of no proposition in Euclid, the demonstration of which is more satisfactory and more irresistible, than the conclusion which has now been drawn. Were it possible therefore, to ascertain who are incapable of relishing such society and such employments as have been described, it would be easy to indicate those, who need to be regenerated. This, indeed, is not possible. No one can infallibly know the heart of another. Yet it will require no labored investigation to be convinced that a capacity for celestial enjoyments is by no means common. All, who are at present averse from those exercises and that society, which most resemble the society and employments of heaven must, of course, be disqualified to enjoy the latter. Nothing, so far as we can judge, so much resembles the life of glorified saints, as prayer, religious contemplation, and converse with those who are most eminent for their piety. If these were generally relished, there would be reason to doubt, or rather good reason for denying the assertion just made, that a capacity for celestial enjoyments is by no means common. If you yourselves can deliberately and truly say that your highest enjoyments result from devotional duties, pious conversation, and from viewing the justice, benevolence and purity of God, you are not now among those for whom a radical change of heart is requisite; but if the case be so clearly the reverse, that you dare not, or do not need to examine it, the inference can neither be denied nor concealed.

I am now, in the last place, to show that the change of which

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I have been speaking, is necessary for all the intelligent offspring of Adam. You will observe, however, that the truth of what has been already said, does in no degree, depend on the success of this attempt. What has been already proved will forever remain true, even if it be impossible to show that all the intelligent descendants of Adam need to be regenerated. That this is not impossible, however, I shall now endeavor to make apparent.

In doing this, it is obvious to remark that the words which our Saviour used in his conversation with Nicodemus, have no appearance of being confined to any portion of our race. It is not said, Except a heathen be born again, nor Except an extravagant profligate be born again, but, Except any man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

All those passages which show the depravity of the human character are to our present purpose; it will therefore be necessary to cite a number of texts, which were formerly used in proof of that doctrine.

Moses informs us in the eighth chapter of Genesis, that the Lord said in his heart: I will not again curse the ground for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is only evil from his youth. Of those strong passages in the sixth chapter, asserting that "every imagination of man's heart is evil continually," it may be plausibly said, that they describe not the character of mankind, but of that generation which the flood destroyed; a limitation which cannot be applied to these words in the eighth chapter. They relate not to any detachment of men, but to the whole mass.

That moral corruption is common to the whole species, appears from the following words: The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Again: The Son of man came into the world to save sinners; it being likewise asserted, "that he tasted death for every man, and gave his life for the world." It appears then, that our Lord's coming had relation to the whole human race. But if so, and the object of it were to save sinners, it follows that all men were of this character.

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And further, as the design of his coming is said to have been the salvation of them that were lost, it follows, that ruin was the common condition of man;—a moral ruin exposing him to the loss of the soul.

Further, Christ speaks of the world, as hostile to his religion: The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Here are two important assertions; 1. That the works of mankind are evil; 2. That they hated Christ for exhibiting this truth.

They who follow the example of Christ, are said to be a community acting on moral principles, differing from those which influence the world in general: They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. In connexion with this, Christ repeats an idea already noticed, namely, that there is a hostility between the world and his disciples: I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them. The same sentiment is often conveyed in the same words. The least that can possibly be meant by such language is, that the general current of human feelings is less favorable to Christians on account of their religion. But so far as Christians obey their religion they resemble their Master, and him by whom their Master was sent. Considering what was shown under the last particular, viz. that the Gospel declares all men to be sinners, even in so high a degree as to be exposed to perdition, it seems unreasonable to limit the term *world* in preceding passages, in which Christ speaks of the world's enmity to his religion; or to suppose that none are comprehended by it, but certain individuals of uncommon depravity.

Again. That infernal being to whom the Scriptures give the name Satan, is called the god of this world. His devotees are therefore the inhabitants of this world. It would be easy to show that not an evil principle merely, but an intelligent agent is here meant. But let it if you please, be conceded for a moment, that by the term Satan is meant a principle of evil; the consequence will be no less formidable, namely, that man-

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kind are under the influence of an evil principle; i. e. are universally involved in moral corruption.

The same opinion is very strongly supported by that well known passage in the second chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians: Among whom we all had our conversation in the world, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others. The connexion of the passage is this. In the latter part of the preceding chapter, the writer had mentioned under the figure of a resurrection or revival, the change which had been produced in the character of the Ephesians; comparing the power by which it was effected, to that which the Father exerted in raising Christ from the dead. By the introduction of this comparison, he is, according to his manner, led off for a moment from his subject, and resumes it in the beginning of the second chapter, which begins thus: And you hath he quickened, or brought unto life, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein, in time past, ye walked, according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit, that now worketh in the children of disobedience. That thus far Gentiles are meant is conceded without controversy. It immediately follows: Among whom we all had our conversation in time past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others. Nothing can be more natural than to understand the apostle, as speaking in this latter clause of Christians in general, comprehending both Jews and Gentiles.

The last proof, to be adduced from Scripture, is found in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. St. Paul there considers the whole family of man as consisting of those who are in the flesh, and those who are in the spirit. The character of the former is, that they mind the things of the flesh; the character of the latter, that they mind the things of the spirit. It is implied further, that all would be of the former description, i. e. that all would make the present world the centre of their desires and efforts, were they not the subjects of an external influence: Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be

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the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God; but if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.

It would be easy to multiply quotations of the same import. But these, it is believed, render it sufficiently evident, that the necessity of regeneration is universal. This change must be experienced by those who bend beneath the weight of cares and poverty; by those who are encumbered with superfluous wealth. It is necessary to the young, though a thousand allurements cheat them into the disbelief of it, and for the aged, in whom the habits of sin have become inveterate. It is necessary to the refined and studious, no less than to the unlettered cultivator of the desert. It is necessary to the bold despiser of religion, and to the more cautious, restrained, and reputable sinner. It is alike necessary to the abject slave, and to those by whom nations are brought to slavery. Without it, "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman," will desire to "hide themselves in the dens, and rocks, and mountains; and will say to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us, and cover us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

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LECTURE XXXVIII.

REGENERATION.

Two things have been already shown; 1. That regeneration is a moral change, and, 2. That the necessity of it is universal.

I am now to inquire, whether there be any thing irrational in attributing this change to divine agency; then consider what is the testimony of Scripture on this subject; and lastly inquire, whether there be not, even now, many incontestable facts, of which, without the supposition of divine influence, no good account can be given.

1. Is there any thing irrational in attributing to divine agency that alteration of moral character, which in Scripture language is termed a new birth?

That God should create a world, in the minutest parts of which we distinctly perceive the marks of intelligence and design, and then permit this same world to exist without any further attention from him, implies an absurdity, little, if in any degree, less glaring, than that of atheism. If the world were worth making, it was worth preserving and superintending. If it were created for some purpose, it must, for the same, be continued; and if there be some purpose, for the accomplishment of which the world is continued, it is impossible to conceive, that Deity should not exercise that influence, whatever it be, which is necessary to secure this purpose from proving abortive.

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But the intellectual part of creation is far most important. In examining the history of past ages, we notice, with considerable interest, no doubt, an earthquake, the appearance of a comet, the eruption of a volcano, the formation of a new gulf, or a new island; but it is the changes which are effected among intelligent beings;—it is national wars and revolutions, which justly engross our highest attention. These have a far more intimate connexion, than the other, with human happiness and human virtue. Now, these events are not mechanical, but all result from human choice. If, therefore, God had not either directly or indirectly, any influence on the tempers and volitions of men, he could not regulate these great events; and the universe, so far as its most important interests are involved, would be in a very slight degree, if at all, under the divine control. How inconsistent such an opinion would be, not only with the most enlightened philosophy, but with the common ideas of mankind whether Christian, Jewish, or pagan, it is unnecessary to show.

But most men are convinced, not only that the world in general is under a divine superintendence, but that this superintendence embraces their own circumstances, and, in some instances at least, their characters. If they are in danger, they doubt not but Deity may, by invisible agency, secure their escape. If they are in perplexity, as to the course which will issue most advantageously, they question not the possibility of being divinely directed. Whether habituated themselves to devotion or not, they suspect no impropriety in the prayers of others, who ask of God to illuminate their understandings, to secure them from error, and to advance within them all virtuous dispositions. Few persons, I apprehend, ever imagined that the following lines of Thomson contained any thing, inconsistent with the most rational views of the character of God, or the condition of man:

"Father of light and life; thou good supreme;
O teach me what is good; teach me thyself;

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Save me from folly, vanity and vice,
From every low pursuit; and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never fading bliss."

Now, the prayer contained in this charming language, is undeniably formed on the opinion, that human virtue does, in some way or other, depend on the agency of God.

From quotations, which are often made on this subject from heathen philosophers, you are probably convinced that such men as Cyrus, Socrates, and Plato, and, among those of a later period, Cicero, Seneca, and Simplicius, occasionally expressed sentiments, surprisingly coincident with those, generally acknowledged among believers in Christianity. They acknowledged that virtue had a celestial origin. *Nemo igitur vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit.* (Cic. de nat. Deor.)

It is well known that men have a degree of influence on the moral character of each other. A man, fully determined on the commission of a crime, is sometimes diverted by the seasonable remonstrance of a friend. In a similar way, have habits of profaneness and sensuality, in some few instances, been interrupted, or effectually broken. Now, if one human agent may have some influence on the moral character of another, is it not perfectly reasonable to believe that He, who is the Creator of human souls, and who has therefore a perfect knowledge of their powers and their propensities, may have on the moral character of his creatures a far greater influence? If you can, in any degree, restrain the vices of another, is it incredible, that God, who is the Father of spirits, should eradicate those vices, or implant real virtue?

2. I am now to consider what testimony the Scriptures bear, as to the subject before us.

Much is said in the Old Testament, under the form both of promises and predictions, concerning the prevalence of religion in future ages, especially under the reign of Messiah; and the effect is, with great clearness of language, attributed to a divine

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influence on the heart. In the one hundred and tenth psalm, there is a promise of the Father to Christ: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. When persons are willing to acknowledge Christ as their sovereign and to submit to his laws, they are regenerated. This voluntary subjection is, therefore, here attributed to the power of Christ.

In the prophecy of Ezekiel, is foretold a time, when the dispersed Jews shall be restored to their country and to the church of God; after which they shall cordially adhere to their covenant engagements. This is foretold, not as a matter of casualty, but the effect of divine influence: Thus saith the Lord, though I have cast them off among the heathen, and though I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a little sanctuary in the countries, where they shall come. I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered: and I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within you: and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh.

A great number of similar passages, it is well known, are found in the prophetic writings. It will avail nothing to say, by way of objection, that as these expressions relate to the Jews, nothing can be argued from them, in regard to mankind in general; since a Jew has no aversion from piety, which is not common to our whole race. It will hardly be said, after a little deliberation, that the Jew becomes virtuous in one manner, and the Gentile in another; that while the former is dependent on his Maker for an obedient heart, the latter produces one merely by his own industry.

If, however, any doubts of this nature can be entertained, on reading the Old Testament, they cannot fail to be removed, when we consult the testimony of Christ and his apostles. In the third chapter of John, to which we have repeatedly had recourse, our Saviour asserts not only the universal necessity of the change, but the universal necessity of divine power in producing it. The same unerring instructor said to the Jews:

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No man can come unto me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him. Suppose, if you please, that our Saviour, in this declaration, meant nothing more than this, that no man will, in fact, believe in him, unless drawn by the Father; it will still prove, incontestably, that in whatever instances regeneration is effected, God, and not man, is to be acknowledged as the cause.

St. James, in the first chapter of his epistle, says: Of his own will, i. e. of God's own will, begat he us, with the word of truth. St. Peter adopts similar language: Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Paul, in the name of Christians, gave thanks to the Father, "who had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Now it has been shown, that none are qualified to enjoy this inheritance, but those who have been renewed. These words of the apostle do clearly assert, therefore, that renovation is the effect of divine influence. In the same apostle's letter to the Ephesians, we have the following remarkable passage: By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works. Here the same idea is twice conveyed in different words: 1. That faith is the gift of God; and 2. That believers are a divine workmanship; the effect of a divine, transforming power. Repentance is an exercise of the renewed heart. This, too, the apostle represents, as the effect of divine operation. For, speaking of the opposers of Christianity, he says: If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth.

The moral change produced in the Ephesian converts, St. Paul mentions not only as the effect of divine energy, but as an effect of such magnitude, as to resemble the raising of our Lord from the dead. It is called the exceeding greatness of God's power.

To the same cause, are we taught to ascribe the perseverance

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of saints. They are not less dependent on God than they were before they assumed that character. They are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

To avoid the conclusion, so naturally resulting from these and similar passages, it has been alleged, that by the Spirit, is meant nothing more than the Scriptures, which are given by inspiration. Persons are said to be born of the Spirit, we are sometimes told, when the word of God has such influence on them, as to lead them to a life of piety, though no direct agency of the Spirit is employed.

It is indeed true, that Paul says to the Corinthians: I have begotten you through the gospel; and the church is said to be cleansed and sanctified by the word. But neither of these expressions excludes the agency of the Spirit. It is not doubted, that the instructions of Christianity are important instruments of conversion. But we deny them to be more than instruments. They are not to be raised from the rank of instruments to that of agents. The children of God, or, if you please, men of true virtue, are said to be chosen "through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." In this place, sanctification of the Spirit is mentioned in distinction from the word; and, therefore, cannot be supposed to mean the same thing.

If additional proofs were needed to establish the doctrine of a divine influence in the production and maintenance of piety in the human heart, they may be found in the eighth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. To be led by the Spirit, and to have the Spirit dwelling in us, is there declared essential to our religious security: If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he, that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if through the Spirit, ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Unless the necessity of divine influences

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be here asserted, these strong declarations can have little or no import.

3. I am now to inquire whether there be not some incontestable facts, of which, without supposing a divine influence, no good account can be given.

That this inquiry may come to a fair decision, it will be necessary to consider with what extreme difficulty men are persuaded to abandon any vice, to which they are addicted. Go to the man, who has been long in the use of impure or profane language. Ask him, whether he believes in God and the sacred Scriptures. On these subjects he disavows all doubt. Ask him, whether it be a matter of indifference with the Almighty, that his name is blasphemed, and his oracles desecrated. This he will not affirm. Ask him if the pleasures of profaneness be so exquisite, solid, and permanent, as to justify that daring hazard, which he incurs, of losing his soul. Probably he is confounded. His countenance betrays conviction, as well of folly as of guilt. But is he reclaimed? Far from this, he scarcely resolves on amendment. If he does, the resolution will not survive the next interview with some thoughtless companion.

Go next to the man, accustomed to inebriation. Remind him of the loss of estate and character. Tell him of universal debility, trembling limbs, a body, at once inflamed and emaciated. Tell him of the mortification of his family, and the pity or scorn of his neighbors. Remind him, moreover, that nothing but repentance can prevent the eternal perdition of his soul, it having been divinely declared, that no intemperate person shall inherit the kingdom of God. Probably he will hear all this without any resentment; perhaps with great emotion and a profusion of tears. He really laments the power of appetite, to which he sees himself gradually becoming a devoted slave. He is neither ignorant nor wholly unmindful of what the end will be. He has witnessed the interment of others, whose bodies had, by intemperance, been prepared for the grave. Yet, like the fascinated bird, he moves, with his eyes open,

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nigher and nigher to the monster, whose jaws will instantly devour him.

In preserving or recovering youth from open crimes, the same difficulty is often experienced. A father perceives in a favorite son a relish for dissipation. This he at first endeavors to counteract without betraying his fears; but resorts to other means, as the danger becomes more evident. With inexpressible tenderness and anxiety, he cautions, and reasons, and remonstrates. At times he flatters himself, that his efforts are not ineffectual. He perceives in his son, something of regret and relenting. But it is all transient. It is produced in a moment; and in a moment dies. He is alarmed with new evidence of profligate habits. The young votary of pleasure eludes every restraint, and glories in rendering abortive all the efforts of parental love. He will be profligate; he must be undone. In all these instances, you will observe nothing but external reformation is the immediate object. Yet this is very seldom effected; and never without extreme difficulty. How then shall we account for those instances, in which not merely the abandonment of some vices, but a radical and universal change of character is produced; and this too, when no uncommon means are employed?

Figure to yourselves a person of unquestionable understanding and sound judgment, of mature age, and of no uncommon liveliness of imagination, surrounded with respectable connexions, relishing in a high degree the pursuits and amusements of fashionable life;—suppose him to possess from nature a more than ordinary share of haughtiness; to have received, in youth, little instruction of a religious kind; and to have been highly disgusted with subjects of that nature. This person, let it be imagined, without any thing to render him dissatisfied with the world, and without any effort on the part of others, discovers at once, that all is not right,—flies from one object to another—but finds, that former pursuits, he knows not why, no longer yield their accustomed pleasure. On repairing to the Scriptures, he finds his own character portrayed in the follow-

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ing language: Lover of pleasure, more than lover of God: having no hope, and without God in the world.

The sacred oracles become more intelligible, for this obvious reason, that they are more interesting, and occupy unusual attention. This person, let it be supposed, becomes strongly attached to the Bible,—rapidly acquires a knowledge of its doctrines, and takes pleasure in those devout exercises, which it enjoins.. His supercilious courage is exchanged for meekness, condescension, and active benevolence. All domestic and social duties are attended to with unusual punctuality. Though far less gaiety than formerly, there is more cheerfulness;—a cheerfulness, supported by ground which can never be shaken; I mean the perfect character and government of the Most High.

The instance mentioned is not fiction, but undeniable history; nor is it essentially different from a thousand others.

The change described is great and excellent,—that the person, subsequently to it, makes a far better use than previously, of his intellectual powers;—that as a rational, immortal being, he acts much more in character, cannot be denied without asserting that vice is better than virtue, selfishness better than benevolence, and the veriest trifles better worth our attention, than immortal life;—it cannot be denied, without contradicting the best notions of virtue, prevailing in the world. For, if there be any such thing as virtue, in what does it consist, if not in reverence and affection towards God and good will and probity to men, evinced by uniform attention to social duties?

Now, I ask, what has produced this change, so great and undeniably excellent?—a change, not confined to a particular habit, but extending to the whole character? I ask this question, while it is distinctly in your view, that parents, however judicious or affectionate, so commonly labor in vain, when they attempt to reclaim a child from particular vices?

Persons, who are determined that no evidence, however glaring, shall produce conviction in favor of the doctrine contemplated, may observe,

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1. That, in the case described, and in all those, which are similar, no real change of heart is produced. I ask, if there be any criterion, by which to judge of a man's heart, but his deportment? If there be not, the assertion now made by way of objection, falls at once. For, that there is a material alteration in behavior, is beyond dispute.

2. It may be said, that we should not judge hastily; and that present appearances, however flattering, may soon vanish. The remark here made is perfectly just. We ought by no means to be highly confident from present appearances. But, though the remark be true, it has no force, as an objection to the doctrine; because in numberless instances exhibited in every age, this professed conversion has been followed by a life of engaging and uniform virtue.

3. It may be said, that many persons, professing to have become regenerate, have afterwards returned to vice with new avidity. Now if our doctrine were, that all, who profess to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, are in fact renewed, this objection would be unanswerable. But we assert only this, that many persons of sound judgment and good information, profess to have experienced a change of heart, whose subsequent lives well correspond with such a profession, and continue to the end, materially different from what they were previously to the time, at which this alteration is supposed to have been effected.

But there are others, you tell me, who after making these high professions, though they may not become openly vicious, render it sufficiently manifest, that they have no more virtue than their neighbors. This is perfectly true. But do you conclude, that there is no such thing as truth and probity on earth, because some men of suspicious morals pretend to them? Do you conclude that there was no sincere friend of Jesus Christ among his twelve companions, because Judas was a traitor? Do you confidently infer, that there was never a piece of standard gold, because there have been many counterfeits? If not, can we be justified in denying the regeneration of those, (and the number is not small,) whose subsequent lives have done

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honor to religion and to the human race, because professing to have had the same feelings, have sup indifferent character, or relapsed into open vice?

4. There is another objection, which we must not leave unnoticed. It is this. The alteration contended for, is sometimes accompanied with great agitation of the passions. It is preceded by distressing anxiety, and followed by proportionate elevation. This, it may be said, is quite an irrational thing, and therefore must not be attributed to divine influence.

I answer, 1. That the strong emotions, now mentioned, are by no means, the universal accompaniments of regeneration. Some, it is believed, are renewed at so early a period, that recollection does not extend to it. In most instances, perhaps, the precise period, at which a new disposition was formed, is not capable of being ascertained. As that high degree of anxiety, specified in the objection, is far from being universal; so the joy, approaching to transport, is very uncommon.

Allowing the objection, therefore, all the force, to which it can possibly pretend, it will prove only against these instances; but nothing against the doctrine in general. But I will endeavor to show, that even in regard to these instances, the objection proves nothing.

Hope and fear are passions common to our natures. The object of the former is some good, not certainly beyond our reach; the object of the latter, some evil, from which we are not secure. In any given instance, either of these passions will be excited to a degree, corresponding with the greatness of its object, its proximity, and the distinctness with which it is seen. We do not greatly fear a small evil, nor one at a vast distance, nor one, which is viewed transiently. As these passions are common to our natures, we never think unfavorably of a man, on account of them, so long as they are not indulged to a degree disproportionate to their objects. A very high degree of fear would not be thought unreasonable in a mother, whose infant was lying near the verge of a crumbling precipice. If some persons were at that moment approaching the infant,

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very high hopes might for the same reason be justified. When this infant was actually snatched from the danger, what adamantine philosophy is that which condemns her unutterable joy?

Now there are eternal rewards for the righteous, and eternal punishments for the wicked. So he hath declared, who will himself judge the world. It will not be asserted, that all are righteous. The contrary is too evident to admit a moment's doubt. Suppose, then, that a person, either by the word or Spirit of God, or in any way whatever, is convinced, not superficially, but effectually and feelingly convinced, that he is himself in the class of the wicked, and exposed to eternal destruction; has this person, or has he not, cause to be afraid? If great fears can, in any case, be justified, on what principle can it be asserted, that in the case supposed, they are unreasonable? If, after a time, this person should be relieved from this anxiety, by perceiving in himself moral qualities, which distinguish the righteous; i. e. such persons as will receive eternal life, would his cause of joy be less, than that of a mother, whose infant was snatched from the crumbling precipice? What now I demand, is left to justify or even to render tolerable, that ridicule, with which appearances of this kind are often treated?

But even if these distressing fears, and transporting joys, which, let it be still remembered, do not universally, nor even commonly attend regeneration; if, I say, these very strong terrors and joys were unreasonable, God is not answerable for them any further, than as he is the author of our natures; conformably to which nature, a sight of danger rouses fear; and a perception of security, or advantage acquired, excites joy;—as he gives to the wicked man a clear sense of what is indeed his character and his danger; and to the righteous man a perception of this fact, that he has indeed become the servant of righteousness. Though a man, on the recovery of a son from sickness, should exhibit a joy, which was unbecoming, it would not be the less certain, that the recovery itself was not the result of divine power.

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LECTURE XXXIX.

REGENERATION.

So much having already been said as to the necessity of regeneration, and of divine agency in producing it, we may, with good reason, feel anxious to ascertain the nature of the change which it implies. That this change relates to the heart and not to the intellect, was shown in a former lecture. It remains that we briefly inquire, what is the character of the heart after this change has been produced.

1. Though it is undeniable that virtue or holiness is our highest interest, and that lasting happiness can be obtained in no way but that of virtue, it is not true that virtue consists in prosecuting our own interest, as such. If there be in this any appearance of paradox, it will vanish, I think, when we take into view the following consideration. Integrity and courtesy of behaviour are connected with permanent esteem. But let it once be ascertained, that such integrity and courtesy are supported by no better principle than a regard to public esteem, and even that object is not obtained. In like manner, though virtue and holiness are our highest interest, that is not virtue, the highest principle of which is a regard to ourselves. That we are allowed to regard ourselves, I do not deny; that self love (which I conceive to be merely a love of happiness,) is criminal, I do not affirm. On the contrary, I suppose it common to every intelligent, and to every sensitive being in the universe. All which I assert is, that self love acting in any way

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whatever, does not constitute virtue, or that moral state which is consequent to regeneration.

That virtue cannot be predicated of him, who acts merely with regard to his happiness or interest in the present life, will hardly be disputed. But if I am not truly virtuous, merely because I abstain from a course of behaviour externally criminal, through fear of punishment to-morrow, next year or twenty years hence; can I be virtuous because my anticipation embraces a larger space of time, and I abstain from such behavior through fear of punishment a hundred years hence, i. e. long after the soul shall be separated from the body?

Nor will the case be materially altered, if, instead of fear of punishment, I am actuated by hope of enjoyment. If a regard to one's own advantage in this life be not sufficient to constitute an action virtuous; neither would a similar regard to future advantage or happiness be sufficient for this purpose. If you are not ready to accede to this? but are of opinion, that the pursuit of our own advantage, to be enjoyed after death, is essentially different from the pursuit of present advantage, it will be important to consider in what the difference consists. It must consist either in the greater forethought, implied in one case, than in the other; or else, in a superiority of taste.

As to the first, the moral quality of an action, depends on the motive; but does not depend on the time at which that object which constitutes the motive is to be obtained. A man, let it be supposed, has two designs in his view; the success of one ensures advantage to himself at the close of one year; the success of the other ensures greater advantage at the close of ten years. To concert and prosecute the latter design may evince a different quality of intellect, from what is shown by concerting and prosecuting the former. It may discover more penetration and forethought. But as indications of moral qualities, they are precisely on a level. Though both are consistent with virtue, neither implies it. That forethought does not constitute an action virtuous, will be further evident from this consideration, that much of it is sometimes employed by the worst men

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in forming their worst designs. The purposes of ambitious men are never confined to the present year; they relate to the whole space of mortal life, and even to events beyond it. When Caesar died, he had formed designs which could scarcely be executed in the ordinary age of man. So had Charles XII. of Sweden. (Big. 3, v. 437.) The present emperor of France has been solicitous not for his own security and aggrandizement only, but for the splendor of his family after his decease.

But secondly, though it should be allowed, that the character of an action, the principal motive to which is one's own advantage, is not materially changed by the proximity or distance of that contemplated advantage, there may be supposed to exist an important difference between an action, to which we are influenced by the hope of temporal enjoyments, and by the hope of enjoyments beyond the grave, because these last are of a highly superior nature.

I acknowledge at once, that any person susceptible of happiness from those objects, which yield the bliss of heaven, possesses real virtue. That taste, which is implied in such susceptibility, is peculiar to the virtuous, or the renewed. But wherever that taste exists, there is a love to virtue as such, and independently of its rewards. The strongest incentive to upright actions, in the case supposed, is not personal advantage, but inherent affection to moral rectitude. It does by no means follow however, that all persons who are influenced by the hopes of future enjoyment, possess that moral relish which has now been mentioned. The Pharisee, noticed in our Saviour's parable, who fasted twice a week, gave tithes of all he possessed, and thanked God, that he was not as other men, appears not to have been actuated exclusively by a regard to human applause; but partly by the hope of remuneration after death. Yet it would be preposterous to believe him to have been susceptible of happiness from the objects and exercises of the christian paradise. To act from a general expectation of advantage or reward to be obtained hereafter, without considering in what that advantage or reward is to consist, implies no moral

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taste, superior to theirs, whose object is present wealth, reputation or influence.

2. It is the moral character of the heart when renewed, to love virtue or holiness for its own sake. This implies supreme affection for the Deity as that being, in whom there is perfect moral rectitude. It implies obedience to the commands, and submission to the dispensations of God, as these are the result of such rectitude. For the same reason, it implies complacency in the virtuous, and benevolence to all sentient beings.

This state of the heart is occasionally expressed in the Scriptures, by each of the following terms, love to God, love to men, and love to both.

Righteous persons are described as those who love God: All things shall work together for good to them who love God. Again: Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Every one that loveth, is born of God and knoweth God; and he that loveth God, loveth his brother also. Love is the fulfilling of the law. When one of the Jewish doctors inquired of Christ, which was the greatest commandment in the law; he received in reply: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The complacency which the regenerate feel in contemplating the moral perfections of God, is felt in a proportionable degree when qualities of a similar kind are witnessed in his creatures. Nor is their benevolence confined to the one in exclusion of the other. Virtuous or renewed men feel benevolence toward the Deity, as well as complacency and admiration. A being does not cease to be an object of good will, because his happiness is secure, and independent of our efforts and choice. A pious friend whom death has translated to the eternal kingdom of God, does not cease to inherit our affection. The same good

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will, which during his state of probation, while his happiness might in some degree depend on our exertions, prompted us to make such exertions, will now be evinced by the pleasure which we feel in contemplating the honor and felicity to which he is raised; and which are henceforward as independent of us, as are the honor and felicity of God himself.

We are next to inquire, whether this love of virtue for its own sake, which implies complacency in the virtuous, and benevolence to all sentient beings, originates when the heart is renewed, or whether at that time, it only acquires a preponderating power; in other words, whether regenerated persons are distinguished from others by a new quality of the heart, or only by a greater degree of the same quality.

On this question, the christian church has been long divided.

The opinion that regenerated persons are distinguished from others by a new moral quality, is supported by the following arguments.

1. The language of Scripture in which this change is described, corresponds much better with this supposition, than with the other.

If nothing but the increase of a good disposition previously existing, is meant by the term regeneration, it is evident that the difference between a renewed and an unrenewed person, will generally if not universally, be exceedingly small. There must be somewhere a dividing line. According to the supposition we are investigating, there must be a certain number of degrees of good disposition, which the unrenewed person may possess, more than which he cannot possess, and yet retain his unrenewed character. The smallest increase of this number must change his standing and place him amoug the regenerate. Designate if you please, the greatest quantum of good disposition, possible to a man remaining unregenerate, by the number of five hundred. The moment at which he comes into possession of one additional degree, he becomes of course a renewed man, entitled to all the privileges of such a character. Yet the change produced is extremely small. But

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the language applied to regeneration by the sacred writers, is not suited to express a change so inconsiderable. Were no greater alteration than this designed, would men be said to be born anew,—to be born from above,—to pass from death unto life,—to have old things done away, and all things become new, —to be raised from the dead,—from being the enemies of God, would they be said to become his friends; and would the power by which such a change is effected, be compared to that which was wrought in Christ, when he was raised from the dead?

2. The Scriptures seem very clearly to represent the difference between the saint and the sinner, as consisting in a new disposition, and not in higher degrees of disposition, previously existing: Every one that loveth is born of God. St. John does not say, that he who loveth to such a degree, is born of God; nor is it easy to perceive the truth of his declaration, if many who are not born of God, possess the quality here mentioned.

Our Lord said concerning the Jews: I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. It was the quality itself, you perceive, and not merely a high degree of it, of which they were destitute. Had they possessed this love, however deficient in degree, I see not how the declaration could be defended. At least, it will be allowed, that the language is precisely what it would be were our doctrine true, and such as it probably would not be, were the doctrine false. The same infallible teacher, on another occasion, used an expression, still more forcible: Ye have seen and hated both me and my father. If Christ did not by these words deny that those to whom they were spoken, possessed any degree of love for their Creator and their Saviour, it is difficult to perceive how such a denial could be expressed.

But how, you may ask, can we argue from the character of the Jews to that of all unrenewed men? An assertion might be true in regard to the former; and yet not universally true, as it respects the latter. I answer, that there is no reason for sup-

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posing Jewish sinners to have been essentially different from others. But the matter appears to be placed above all doubt by other expressions of a more general import; and that which is here said of the Jews, is said to be common to mankind: If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you:—the world hath hated them because they are not of the world. It is not necessary to our present purpose, to understand by the term hatred, any thing more than destitution of love; as our object is to prove merely, that unrenewed men are thus destitute.

3. If the difference between the righteous and the wicked consists only in the degrees of a quality, common to both, this difference is much less than that which exists between many of the latter description. In their characters there is great variety. Some will be beaten with many stripes, our Lord has informed us, and some with comparatively few. But their punishment will be exactly proportionate to their demerit. It must be true, therefore, that their characters or their demerits are various. This is undeniably implied in the opinion, against which we contend. For if men while unrenewed have, strictly speaking, a holy or virtuous principle, which, if sufficiently increased, will constitute them holy or virtuous, their characters vary, as this principle recedes or advances. At one time, a sinner may have one degree of virtue; at another, five hundred; and different sinners may at the same time be thus different. But between the sinner and the saint, i. e. between the renewed and the unrenewed person, there may be according to this opinion but the difference of a single degree. Now, the Scriptures speak of a broad line of distinction between the righteous and the wicked; between those who serve God, and those who serve him not. Happiness without end is prepared for the one; and punishment equally durable is reserved for the other. Can it rationally be supposed, that of those who are obnoxious to this punishment, certain individuals are five hundred degrees better than others, and but one degree worse than some, who shall inherit eternal rewards?

Besides, if such power of language;—such bold figures have

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been employed to describe a change, so inconsiderable as regeneration must be according to this supposition, how has it happened, that so very little is said, and that in a very depressed style, concerning the far greater change, produced in the sinner's character previously to regeneration?

4. Whether it be common or not, for believers to have assurance of their safety, such assurance is mentioned in Scripture, as being attainable, and the want of it, as being a fault: Give all diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end. Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Know ye not your own selves? We know, that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. St. John often speaks of knowing ourselves to be in Christ. Now, such knowledge is perfectly unattainable unless there be some standard, by which our characters may be tried. If the righteous differ from the wicked only in their degrees of goodness, it is impossible for any person to ascertain, whether he belongs to one class or the other, unless that degree should be distinctly marked, which is on the dividing line. No such degree is marked; and therefore no person can, if this doctrine be true, have assurance of salvation. It would follow, then, that the Scriptures require Christians to perform impossibilities; i. e. to know themselves, —to make their calling and election sure, without giving them a standard, by which to determine.

I see not why, in determining this question, the testimony of some persons of integrity and good understanding should not be considered, as of some weight. There are many persons, whose judgment would on common subjects be highly valued, who are confidently and permanently persuaded, that previously to regeneration, they were wholly destitute of that principle, by which they have since been actuated. There have been in various Christian countries, and in different ages, persons of acknowledged integrity and good discernment, thus fully persuaded concerning themselves. It is an opinion, in which they have continued with great firmness during the remainder of life. Nor has this persuasion been confined to those, the former part

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of whose lives was obviously immoral; but has been entertained by many, in whose visible deportment, there was little to reprehend.

Now, that self-deception is not only possible, but easy, I readily grant. But it must be allowed, that no person has so good an opportunity of knowing what passes in the mind of a man, as he has himself. He can ascertain more accurately, than any other, what are his own intentions and motives. Let us view this matter a little more distinctly. Some of the persons, of whom I am now speaking, are acknowledged to possess great integrity; and to give as much evidence of piety, as any on earth. But it is not their opinion of their present piety, but of their former want of it, in which we are now concerned. Grant, if you please, that self love may lead them to think too favorably of their present character; what imaginable reason can be assigned why they should think too unfavorably of what they once were? I do not mention this argument, as alone conclusive; but that it has much weight, I think, can hardly be denied.

The way is now prepared for considering the question whether regeneration is instantaneous.

Though the arguments which have been used, are, it is believed, fully sufficient to show, that the difference between the renewed and others, does not consist in degrees of that which is common to both, I would ask, whether even on that supposition, there would not be some instant, at which the necessary degree is acquired? Even if regeneration were as gradual, as the apparent course of a star from east to west, the question must receive an affirmative answer; for, however long the star may be in gaining the meridian, its transition is instantaneous; there is no conceivable duration, in which it is not either in one hemisphere or the other. Neither is there any duration in a man's life, in which he has not either complied, or not complied with the terms of the Christian covenant.

But if, as we have endeavored to prove, there is a radical,

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an essential difference between the saint and sinner, the matter will appear still more obvious. If the good man has a moral quality, which he once had not, there must be some moment, when he began to possess it.

It is believed by many divines of much respectability, that the wickedness of the human heart is invariably progressive, till a change is produced.

That it never is so, I will not assert; but that such is universally the fact, cannot, I apprehend, be easily proved. The argument relied on is this. Impenitence is criminal in proportion to light, enjoyed by the impenitent person. It is an unusual portion of this, which produces in the sinner conviction and anxiety. Therefore, while persons do not submit to the terms prescribed in the Christian religion, they are, in a higher degree than formerly, criminal in the sight of God.

It is not to be denied, that wicked men, other things being equal, are criminal in proportion to the clearness, with which duty is made known. But, 1. It is not certain, that all persons, immediately before their moral change, have greater degrees of light, than at any former period; nor, 2. Is it certain that other things are equal. That all the individuals of a nation, supposed to enjoy an equal degree of religious knowledge, are precisely equal in moral character, is highly improbable; and is, therefore, by no means to be assumed as true. Besides, if a sinner has increased in moral demerit from ten to fifteen degrees, can it possibly be doubted, that God has the power of reducing him to his former state? Now if it be undeniably possible for God to reduce, in some degree, the sinner's obduracy, before a new principle is imparted, or a radical change produced, who can be confident, that he never in this way exerts his power?

It is a fact admitting no question, that some are renewed at a time, not distinctly known to themselves. But if the opposition of the human heart to Christ and his gospel invariably increases until the moment, when supreme affection for these objects, and a consequent hatred of sin commences, it

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is extremely difficult, to say the least, to account for the fact, just mentioned. Whereas, if God occasionally or frequently sees fit to reduce or diminish the rebellion of the heart, previously to that evangelical submission, which is the effect of renewing grace, the difficulty will be, in no small measure, diminished;—an opinion, which you will observe, has no essential resemblance to that, against which we have contended, namely, that any thing of real holiness precedes regeneration.

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LECTURE XL.

REGENERATION

In the present lecture, an answer will be attempted to the following inquiries.

I. Whether any thing more than increased light is necessary to the production of a moral change in the human heart.

II. Whether that divine influence necessary to produce this change, is always bestowed according to previous character.

III. Whether any means or efforts used by the impenitent, render their conversion more probable.

IV. Whether it be right to direct persons of this description to the use of means with a view to regeneration.

That copious answers should be given to these inquiries in the compass of a short discourse, will not be expected.

I. Is any thing more than increased light necessary to the production of a moral change in the human heart?

To defend the negative of this question, has been undertaken by individuals justly esteemed for talents, close investigation, and exemplary life. To support their belief, the following arguments are used; 1. Men will pursue what appears to be conducive to their happiness; if, therefore, they neglect that which is really so, it is because they need to be shown, in what their greatest happiness, or their highest interest consists. Whenever this is shewn, they will pursue it. 2. If men do not love Deity, whose character is perfectly amiable, it must be that they do not know it to be such. When this ignorance is removed, God will become an object of their love.

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That these arguments are inadequate to the purpose for which they are adduced, even on supposition, that virtue or piety implies nothing but external obedience, it will not be difficult to show. Does the intemperate man correct his habits, as soon as he is convinced, that his own interest requires such correction? So far from this, there is an avowed conflict between his inclination and appetite. He knows what his health, and interest, and happiness require. Can it be believed, for a moment, that all profligate men consider vice, as conducive to permanent good, and virtue conducive to evil? Nothing is more common, than to hear them confess the contrary.

But you inquire, Do men choose the greatest apparent good? I answer, that men do not always choose what in their settled judgment, is the greatest good. But if the question be, whether the good, expected from a sinful action, does not at the moment when the will consents, appear greater than the good, arising from abstinence, it is a question of so much difficulty, that I would not, with confidence, make a decision. In any event, the determination of an inquiry, so very abstruse and metaphysical, can have little weight in opposition to numerous and obvious facts. But let it be conceded, if you please, that the affirmative is true, namely, that at the moment when the will consents to a sinful action, the good, thence resulting, appears greater than the good accruing from abstinence; still the action is against light,—it is against the settled judgment. The reason why the advantage of sinning appears greater than the advantage of abstinence, is, that the offender perversely chooses at that moment to look exclusively on the arguments for one side; he keeps his mind steadily fixed on the pleasure or advantage of the crime, but will not consider the advantages or pleasures of a quiet conscience.

It appears, then, that a knowledge of our duty does not infallibly engage us to perform it, even so far as external actions are concerned; by consequence, increasing light will not certainly produce even outward reformation; much less will it pro-

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duce that inward affection for moral rectitude and the divine character, which is implied in true virtue.

Indeed, whoever speaks of loving virtue, or the Deity, because the possession of such affections would be for our personal advantage, will find difficulty, either in explaining his language, or in defending his opinions.

What kind of love for the Deity is that which proceeds from love to personal interest? Or how does it differ from that love which an ambitious man has for those who are the instruments of his elevation; a love which is commensurate only with their subserviency to that end.

Further, the opinion that nothing but more light or instruction is necessary to render wicked men pleased with the divine character, implies that they are not wicked. It implies, that they are now pleased with what the character of God really is; and are disgusted only with some false ideas, which they have, by some misfortune, imbibed concerning him. Were you in company with the best man on earth, supposing him to be the worst, your aversion from him, considered in the latter character, would prove in you no want of uprightness,—no indisposition to virtue; it would even afford a presumption of your correct moral feelings. Neither would he, after knowing your mistake, feel the least resentment; but acknowledge, that under existing circumstances, your feelings and your treatment of him were precisely what they should have been.

If any further arguments were necessary, I would resort to the following fact, namely, that nations have been attached to the services of their deities, not according as the character of the latter has been pure, but the reverse. The Jews no doubt had more just views of God, than any contemporary nation. Yet there was no prevailing inclination among their neighbors to embrace the Jewish religion; but a strong propensity in the Jews to embrace theirs. The Moabites and Zidonians had no fondness for the worship of Jehovah; but Israel was perpetually enamoured with Chemosh, Astaroth, and Baal-peor.

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It is now, we believe, sufficiently evident that the cause, why men do not love the true God and obey his law, is not the want of light, but of relish for that which is morally good. If so, something more than increased light is wanting to produce a radical change of character.

II. Our next inquiry is, whether that divine influence, necessary to produce this change, is always bestowed according to previous character.

Sin or moral evil is that alone which removes men to a distance from their Maker. Besides this, there is nothing in man, which excites the divine displeasure. Of course, if there be, as we have endeavored to show, any difference in the real demerit of unrenewed men, some are less offensive to him than others. Now, when all other things are equal, it cannot I think, be doubted that those who are less, will receive the grace of conversion in preference to those, who are more offensive. But though I humbly conceive this to be the way of God's proceeding, when other things are equal; there may be ten thousand circumstances, unknown to us, rendering it highly suitable for Deity to depart from it. And there are many facts, by which such a departure is proved.

When it is said that God distributes his favor as a sovereign, it is not meant, at least it ought not to be meant, that he acts either from caprice, or without reason. He never has done, and he never will do an unreasonable action; though many of the circumstances, which render particular dispensations necessary, may far exceed human comprehension.

Paul, before his conversion, breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord; being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them oft unto strange cities, and compelled them to blaspheme Christ. Now though in all this he was less guilty, than if he had not done it as he did, ignorantly in unbelief, he speaks in the strongest terms of his demerit, and declares this as one of the causes, why he obtained mercy, that: Jesus Christ might in him, show forth all long suffering, as a pattern to those, who should afterwards believe

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on his name to eternal life. Some of the Corinthian disciples, he informs us, "who were washed, justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God," had been "thieves, revilers, and extortioners." With regard to such persons, we cannot easily imagine that they received mercy because of their comparative innocence, i. e. the smallness of their crimes.

We have had personal knowledge of individuals who were to all appearance unusually far from the kingdom of God, afterwards reduced to a willing subjection. We should not be justified, therefore, in asserting that divine influence is always proportionate to previous character.

Should this in the view of any appear unjust, a few moments' consideration will correct the error.

No injustice is done to him, whose rights are not violated. But that no person, who has violated a just law, has a right to exemption from its penalty, is a proposition, than which none can be more evident, either in government or morals. Nor can such right be created by the bestowment of pardon on another whose demerits are equal, or even greater. If punishment would have been just before, it is just at present. Whatever favor is bestowed on one, the punishment of another is not rendered greater, nor his crimes less. The relation between his crime and punishment remains the same.

As God is under no obligation to grant pardon to any, so neither is he bound to communicate that celestial influence, which qualifies men to receive pardon. He does indeed bestow both; and exercises his mercy agreeably to his wisdom, i. e. in such a manner, as is most conducive to the order and happiness of the intelligent universe.

But because some distinguished offenders have obtained mercy, while some others apparently less criminal, have passed through life without piety, we can by no means conclude, that such is the usual course of divine proceeding. That it is perfectly immaterial whether unrenewed men restrain their appetites, or give them full liberty; that the most impious, unblush-

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ing profligates are no more unlikely, in general, to receive that grace, which shall fit them for eternal life, than those who, under the influence of conscience maintain a decent sobriety, is a doctrine, which surely looks with a very ill aspect on morality, and derives no support from the oracles of God.

III. We are next to inquire, whether any means or efforts used by the impenitent, render their conversion more probable. That certain religious means have been divinely ordained for the instruction and conversion of the wicked, admits no doubt. Christ delivered his message, "that men might believe, and that believing, they might have life through his name;" and Paul was sent to the Gentiles "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."

It never has been, and I suppose never can be doubted, that the great design of God in communicating the gospel to the world, and in the directions which he gave, that this gospel should be preached to every creature, was the conversion and future salvation of sinners. Now, if means are ordained with reference to a particular end, that end is more likely to be accomplished when means are used, than when they are not. If God has been pleased to appoint, that the gospel should be preached for the instruction and renovation of men; if faith comes by hearing, it is absurd to deny, that the general probability of conversion is greater to those who attend religious services, than to those who neglect them.

Further, the probability of obtaining converting grace is in some degree affected by self-examination. This is so generally believed, that I apprehend, there is scarcely a pious man on earth, who would not rejoice at observing an irreligious child or neighbor, comparing his own character with the Christian standard.

That the performance or neglect of this exercise is not immaterial, even while men are unregenerate, will appear by the following command of St. Paul: Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith. From the very nature of this exhortation, it could not have been given on supposition of the piety of

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those to whom it was directed. Uncertainty on this point rendered investigation necessary. Whatever were the result of this inquiry, i. e. whether it led those who made it, to perceive that they were, or that they were not in the faith, its immediate object was answered. The discovery, however unwelcome to those who were unbelievers, rendered this state, at least, in some degree more hopeful than it was previously.

Again, it is not a matter wholly indifferent, whether men live in the maintenance or neglect of prayer. The Lord said by Ezekiel: For this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them. The blessing to be conferred, was "a new heart and a new spirit." The bestowment of this, the prophet attributes to divine mercy, and declares it to be a thing which God should do for them. Yet he would be previously sought to. They were required to ask of God, that he would "take from them the heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh."

But even if the requirement had not been made in so many words, would not even in that case, the propriety and expedience of the thing have been obvious? Granting these two propositions, 1. That sinners need a new heart; 2. That the bestowment of this is the prerogative of God; will it be denied, that such bestowment should be sought in prayer? If I am in the greatest possible need of a favor, which it is in the power of but one being in the universe to grant; would it not beyond all question, be a point of prudence to make application to him?

That prayer is to be resorted to by all men, even by the unregenerate, receives countenance, to say the least, from that well known passage in our Saviour's sermon on the mount: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened. In the meaning of these words, we believe, is comprehended that a sedulous use of the means, and a diligent inquiry about salvation, are the way in which God and eternal life are usually found. The truth of this is generally allowed, even by those who do not believe that the words which we have cited prove it. President Edwards, whom no person

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suspects of having entertained lax notions of human depravity, uses the following language: "Though God has not bound himself to any thing which a person does, while destitute of saving faith, and out of Christ, there is yet great probability, that in hearkening to this counsel you will live."

You will object, perhaps, that the words of Christ: Ask and ye shall receive, etc. if applied to the unregenerate, are not true. I answer, that in the most rigid sense, they are not true even in application to the renewed; but in a general sense they are true in application to all. If you say that the faithfulness of God requires him to fulfil all his promises as soon as the conditions of them are complied with; and, therefore, as many unrenewed sinners do not find, it is certain they do not seek; I answer, that pious believers frequently do not receive the things for which they pray; and yet they do not think that the fidelity of God is to be impeached. Because one sinner, or ten, or a hundred, have been lost, after paying for a while some earnest attention to their spiritual concerns, it will by no means follow, that earnest and persevering endeavors do not usually issue in the attainment of that grace, which is effectual.

There are various passages of Scripture, both promises and declarations of a general, indefinite nature; and it may be very difficult to ascertain, when those, who claim an interest in them, are entitled to it. Still those passages may be, in a general view, both intelligible and weighty. I will name some of them: A diligent hand maketh rich. We know that some who are diligent in business, do not become rich. Yet, generally speaking, diligence procures wealth. "If ye be willing and obedient," said God to Israel, "ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword." It would assuredly be difficult to fix on the precise degree of disobedience, which should bring destruction on the Jews, or to define that degree of obedience which would keep it off; but the meaning in general is extremely plain.

To mention but one example more: He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be de-

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stroyed. Should these words be taken without any limitation, they would prove what is contrary to fact, that no person, not pious himself, has associated with those, who are; and that no person who is not destroyed, has associated with the profligate. They would prove, then, that when any person becomes the companion of fools, he will perish; whereas some, who have been many years thus connected, have afterwards been renewed and saved.

In like manner, the general object of our Saviour's words: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; is to encourage men to seek God for the bestowment of necessary blessings, whether pertaining to this life, to the renewing of the heart, or to progressive sanctification.

The time will not permit me to notice several other arguments of no inconsiderable weight. Against the sentiments now defended, the following objection is made:

It has not been conceded, but proved, that unrenewed men are destitute of holiness, or real virtue; how then, it may be asked, can any of their actions contribute to their advantage? In answer, I allow that none of those actions merit the least favor; nay, that there is a criminal, and therefore punishable defect in the disposition, with which any of them is performed. But God bestows his grace on what terms he pleases, always, however, agreeably to wisdom. When we are inquiring into the manner in which these are bestowed, facts are of more importance than a thousand objections. Now, it is fact, that because Ahab, an unrenewed sinner, humbled himself, and walked softly, the evil threatened, was not sent in his day. (1 Kings, 21: 29): Seest thou, said God to Elijah, how Ahab humbleth himself? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

In the book of Proverbs, we find two remarkable expressions. One is: The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord. (15: 8.) The other is this: The plowing of the wicked is sin. (21: 4.)

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Now, in whatever manner these passages are understood, it will not be doubted, that the common labors of a wicked man have the same moral complexion, as his prayers. If, therefore, unrenewed men do receive advantage from their industry, they may from their prayers. God may bestow favors in consequence of the one, as well as of the other.

IV. Our next inquiry is, whether it be right to direct unrenewed persons to the use of means with a view to regeneration. The question is not, you will observe, whether any attention to external duties can be a substitute for regeneration; nor whether there be in Scripture any promise of renewing grace, which the unregenerate can claim; but merely whether it be right to direct persons of this description to consult the sacred writings, to hear them explained, and to offer prayer, that the heart may be transformed.

To establish the negative, has been attempted with less success, than ingenuity. The argument on the affirmative side is extremely plain, and so far as I can perceive, perfectly conclusive. St. Paul asserts, that "faith comes by hearing." If so, those who hear, are more likely to obtain faith, than those who do not. This we have endeavored to prove; and it is in fact almost universally conceded. Yes; but a thing may be true, you will say, and yet the declaration of it may be inexpedient. Then the only question is, whether it be a truth to be concealed or divulged. I really know not how it can be concealed, since the apostle has made it so public. But surely his authority is as good to prove the expedience of making it known, as to prove the truth of the doctrine. And it is perfectly immaterial, whether I advise a person to a particular measure, or only propose to him the strongest arguments in favor of it.

It may be objected,

1. To prescribe the use of means for the obtainment of conversion, seems to imply that impenitence proceeds rather from the want of power, than the want of will; else, why are they not required to exercise immediate repentance?

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I reply, that the objection lies with equal force against the Christian's using means to promote personal sanctification. For the will is as much, and the natural power as little concerned in the sinful actions of a believer, as in those of an unbeliever. You may as well, therefore, ask the Christian why he is not perfectly holy, and at this very instant, without the use of means and ordinances.

2. It may be further objected, that if you advise persons to any actions, that they may become renewed, you advise them to remain unrenewed at least during the continuance of that action.

I answer, that this objection, however specious, cannot be much valued even by those by whom it is brought, because they, no less than others, prescribe to believers the use of ordinances as means of religious advancement, i. e. of subduing those corruptions of heart, yet remaining. But this as much implies advice, that these corruptions of heart should be indulged, till resort is had to ordinances, as the advice to sinners, just mentioned, implies encouragement for their continuance in sin. There is not a particle of difference in the two cases.

3. I shall notice one more objection. It is this. If persons in religious anxiety are directed to particular acts or performances, as what may probably issue in their conversion, there is danger, that resting satisfied with these, they will perish without the obtainment of that, which they profess to desire.

I answer, that any truth, however clear, and any exhortation, however pertinent, may be abused. If no truth may be declared until it is certain that a good use will be made of it, all truth must be suppressed.

I acknowledge, however, that great caution is to be used in giving the advice, which has been mentioned. The sinner is to be shown, that nothing short of actual repentance can save him; that he is under present obligations to repent; and that no one can be answerable for the continuance of his life. Acceding to all this, he may still desire to know, whether the obtainment

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of a penitent disposition is more probable in one course of proceeding than in another; whether any thing which he can do, any means, which he can use, will make any difference, as to the prospect of his being renewed. If, on being told, that the probability is somewhat greater to those, who use the means of grace, than to those who neglect them, he becomes well satisfied, resting in the means while the end is not obtained, his blood will most obviously be upon his own head; and can by no means be required at the hands of those, whom he consulted.

But, on the other hand, it ought well to be considered whether there be no danger in withholding this advice. For, if inquisitive, anxious persons, receive no answer to the inquiry just mentioned, it is fairly inferred, that the religious instructor, to whom it is proposed, does not believe that the attainment of renewing grace by those who use means, is more probable than by those who neglect them; nor that criminality is less in one case, than in the other. And, if a sinner can himself, be of the same opinion, there is no imaginable reason, why he should not pursue that course, which is most pleasant to him;—why he should not walk "in the way of his heart, and in the sight of his eyes," forgetting, as far as possible, "that for all these things, God will bring him into judgment."

I have now, my young friends, said all which I designed, by way of stating and proving the doctrine of regeneration. In these lectures, I have either been laboriously proving nothing; or else have made evident the truth of a doctrine, which will, both to myself and you, be of the highest concernment through eternal ages. No person, you will readily grant, ought to entertain an opinion, which he is afraid to examine, nor ought he to shrink from those arguments, which are brought against him. If, therefore, you do not believe that a moral change is necessary to salvation, go directly to the Scriptures, and prove either that they are false, or else, that they inculcate no such doctrine. Be sure, to establish your disbelief so firmly, that it cannot be shaken by days of sickness, or the approach of death. But if

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you have no disposition to make this daring experiment, thus saith the wisdom of God: Turn ye at my reproof: behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, and make known my words unto you: for whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil.

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LECTURE XLI.

SUPPLEMENT TO LECTURES ON REGENERATION.

In the nature and tendency of your studies, there is considerable variety. In all of them the exercise of intellectual powers is required. But the study of morality and religion is designed, through the medium of the intellect, to affect the character and the heart. To acquire correct sentiments on these subjects, becomes, therefore, a matter of high importance. But it is, in no small degree, dangerous to study ethics or religion, merely as a science, and regardless of any practical result. If religion is true, it relates to the obligations and to the eternal condition of human beings. In the theological lectures, which have been delivered this term, it has been my object clearly to exhibit a doctrine, which was taught by Him, whom the Father commissioned to bear witness to the truth. I now ask your attention, while a brief recapitulation is made of the propositions, contained in those lectures, and while an attempt is made to improve them for practical purposes.

It was shown, in the first place, that the change implied in regeneration, is of a moral nature. In the second place, it was inquired for whom this change was necessary. It was shown to be necessary for the heathen, and for all those in Christian countries, whose moral state is no better than theirs. It was shown to be necessary for all who live in the habitual violation of Christian precepts, such as thieves, dishonest, lascivious, and covetous persons;—for drunkards, revilers, and extortioners;—

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for liars, and for such as are accustomed to profane language. For those, moreover, it was proved necessary, on whose minds religious considerations make no deep impression;—for such as are incapable of enjoying the kingdom of God;—and, lastly, for all the intelligent offspring of Adam.

Under the third general head, probable evidence was exhibited from facts and direct evidence from Scripture, that this moral change is the result of divine operation, and is never produced merely by the increase of religious information.

An inquiry was then instituted, as to the character of the heart subsequently to regeneration, and whether this change consists in the reception of a new moral quality, or only in the augmentation of goodness already existing. The latter we endeavored to disprove, and to establish the former.

It was shown to be the characteristic of a renewed heart to love virtue, or holiness, for its own sake. This implies supreme affection for the Deity, as that Being, in whom there is perfection of moral rectitude. It implies obedience to the commands, and submission to the dispensations of God, as these are the result of such rectitude.

For the same reason, it implies complacency in the virtuous, and benevolence to all sentient beings.

The Christian temper, like every other object, must have a beginning. There must be, in regard to every renewed person, a time before which it did not, and after which it did exist.

Though in the bestowment of renewing grace, God acts with sovereign wisdom, and in the exercise of the highest benevolence, the reasons, by which he is influenced, are frequently concealed from human investigation, and spiritual, like temporal favors, are not always distributed in such manner, as to ignorant mortals might seem most suitable. In general, however, there is most reason to hope for the conversion and salvation of such, as, being restrained by the influence of Christian education, maintain regularity of life, and attend, with sobriety, on the institutions of religion.

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Having made the recapitulation, we proceed to improve the subject. And,

I. I request you all to reflect on the remarks, which were made as to the persons for whom regeneration is necessary.

It is necessary for the profane;—by which, I mean those who are accustomed to use, with levity, that language, which expresses objects of a sacred nature, such as the Divine Being and his attributes, or the eternal sanctions of his holy law. How many of those present, are embraced in the description, I know not. It is feared, that the proportion is not small.

In all that vast variety of sins, by which mortals excite the wrath of heaven, I know not whether there is one, which more directly than this, expresses contempt towards the Sovereign of the universe. It is, against the Almighty, a warfare publicly declared. In addressing persons of this class, I have at least one advantage. Should all other sinners question their need of a spiritual renovation, in your case there can be no room for doubt. In the great conflict between virtue and vice, you openly declare on which side your interest is embarked. There is a kind of impious ostentation, with which your hostility to God and his religion is displayed. And you do much towards diffusing around you a spirit of impiety. By a common and a profane use of the most solemn expressions, you teach others to disregard the ideas to which these expressions are applied. You thus allay the terrors of guilt, diminish a sense of moral obligation, and remove those flood-gates, which oppose the torrent of general profligacy. In a very palpable sense, therefore, you act the part of enemies to God, and to the illustrious cause of virtue and righteousness: Marvel not, therefore, that we say unto you, that ye must be born again. Being not only alienated from the life of God, but enemies to him by wicked works, a reconciliation, implying a radical change of heart and character, is the only condition, on which you can enjoy any rational hopes of escaping the wrath to come.

II. It has been shown by the direct testimony of an inspired

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apostle, that every intemperate person is destitute of piety, and has therefore need to be regenerated. Whether the epithet can justly be applied to any among you, I know not. But that there have been those to whom it did apply; those, who, during their academical life, formed those habits, in consequence of which, they are at this moment, lost to virtue and honor, lost to their friends and society, and lost to every well founded hope, either as to the present or future life, is a fact which I blush to acknowledge, but which can neither be denied nor concealed. When it is considered as merely possible, that some individuals among you may now be insensibly advancing to the same deplorable state, you will not be surprised, at my recalling your attention to intemperance and dissipation, as a mark of irreligion; as indicating the necessity of a moral change.

III. Those, on whom religion makes no deep impression, were said to need a spiritual renovation. That this character belongs to most of those, whom I address, will probably be admitted without hesitation. If there are many, who can repel the charge, from such we readily withdraw it.

It would afford a degree of joy not easily expressed, were we ascertained, that many among you possess minds highly sensible to religious truth—tremblingly alive to the denunciations and promises of the gospel. But if it were so, would not the exercises of the Sabbath excite a greater interest? Would discourses on the great doctrines of Christianity, or concerning death and the retributions of eternity, operate like those unmeaning sounds, whose only influence is to paralyze thought and produce sleep?

IV. It was shown that regeneration is necessary for those who are incapable of enjoying the kingdom of God. This proposition is so perfectly obvious, that there can be neither doubt nor error concerning it, excepting as to its application.

As Heaven, or the kingdom of God, is a state of happiness, and you have a capacity for happiness, you may feel confident that you are capable of enjoying this state. But would the presence of God, and the constant devotions of heaven render

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you happy? It has been observed by a writer in whose praise one is scarcely in danger of being extravagant, "That every species of creatures is designed for a particular way of life; to which the nature, the capacities, temper, and qualifications of each species, are as necessary as their external circumstances." For want of such temper and qualifications, those circumstances, and that condition which afford to one person the highest enjoyment, may, to another, be indifferent, or even disgusting. As to your susceptibility of celestial happiness, a correct opinion may be formed from the enjoyment which you receive from intercourse with such as are fairest candidates for it; from those duties which most resemble the employments of saints in light. If the character, law, and providence of God;—if the nature, interposition, and offices of our Saviour;—if that state of perfect moral purity and unutterable glory, which the superabounding grace of God has prepared for his people, are the most pleasant subjects of contemplation;—and if the worship of God is that employment, which you esteem more than any other, you are not to be considered, as incapable of enjoying the Christian Paradise. But, permit me to ask, whether this is a claim, the establishment of which will be generally attempted? Is it not certain; and, from the view which has been taken of the subject, does it not appear so, that you are not susceptible of the joys of the new Jerusalem; or in the words of St. Paul, "not meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?"

This class will comprehend not only all, who were mentioned under the preceding descriptions, such as the profane, dissolute, etc., but some whose morals are scarcely reproachable.

Many who are present, it is believed, are now convinced, that when we are speaking to the unregenerate, we are speaking to them; and that to them are directed all the threatenings and expostulations, which in the word of God, are addressed to unpardoned sinners. Such as the following: Say ye to the wicked, It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. God is angry with the wicked. If ye

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turn not he will whet his sword: He hath bent his bow and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death. Except ye repent, ye shall all perish. Whatever may be your intellectual powers or acquirements, whatever of ease and accommodation there may be in your circumstances, however inviting may be those worldly prospects, which are opening upon you, there is this appalling consideration, that without piety of heart, God is not your portion. The bounties of his providence, in which you are permitted to share, evince his benevolence towards you, but not his approbation. Whether you are engaged in your common pursuits or at leisure;—whether in company or in solitude;—whether you retire to rest, or rise from the bed of slumber, you are in the hands of a Being, to whom you are not reconciled, and from whose bounty the impenitent have nothing to hope beyond the present *life*.

No task can, indeed, be more ungrateful, than that of making a representation, so gloomy and so alarming. But, if the representation is founded in Scripture, the truth it contains, ought not to be concealed. And, that it is thus founded, has, it is presumed, been sufficiently shown.

Again, it was shown in preceding lectures, that regeneration is not effected merely by the communication of additional light. The reason why the sinner does not love the moral character and moral law of God, is not, that he is ignorant of either. The more accurately moral subjects are understood, the more striking will be the contrast between virtue and vice. The more clearly the divine purity is displayed to the sinner's mind, the more obvious will be the moral difference between God and himself; by consequence, he sees more of a character opposite to his own.

Neither does the sinner reject the terms of salvation, for any cause, corresponding with what is usually called physical impossibility. It is merely a disinclination to moral rectitude. It is the want of that disposition, and those feelings, which reason and Scripture unite to approve. The difficulty with the sinner

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is not, that he is ignorant of the character of God, but that he has no complacency in it.

Facts in melancholy abundance corroborate this sentiment. Wicked men, in the immediate view of death, are not renewed by the prospect before them. Many in this condition fully believe, that the salvation of the soul depends on their immediate repentance; and that, without this, the pains of eternal reprobation will, in a few days, or a few hours, be experienced. They not only acknowledge this; but the prospect throws them into the greatest terror. This terror, however, does not effect any radical change of character. It does not inspire them with love to that, which was previously odious to them, nor render offensive that, which they formerly loved.

Further, it was shown, that there is an essential difference between the saint and the sinner, and that the character of the former does not consist in his possessing, in greater degrees, that which is common to both. The one has nothing of that quality, which, in the other, will receive a divine reward. The words of Christ to the Jews, "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you," are applicable to every unrenewed person. In this consists his criminality, and hence will arise his punishment. This want of love to God disqualifies him for the divine presence, and for a participation in the bliss and employments of heaven. Hostile to the Supreme Being, and excluded from heaven, his misery arises from his own depravity, and from the impiety and malevolence of other beings, who resemble himself. This being true, the unrenewed person ought never to consider his condition secure. Retaining his present character, he refuses to repent,—he refuses to love and serve his Maker,—he rejects that gracious covenant, which has been established in the blood of Christ. And though he may, at one time, be more restrained, and sin with less boldness of determination, than at another, the great account to be exhibited against him, is perpetually enlarging; because every sin forms a new article, and he refuses the terms on which the whole may

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be cancelled. It follows, therefore, that were light poured into the mind in streams ever so pure and copious, no radical change of character would be hereby ensured.

I am painfully sensible of the difficulty of presenting this subject, in such manner, as to make any impression on the minds of the young. You feel, as if health were firm, death far distant, and religion unreasonable. Your natural aversion from serious contemplation, gives additional deception to these appearances. You consider it, perhaps, as one of the privileges of youth to treat religion with indifference, if not with levity. In this you feel supported by prevailing custom. In the majority of those around you, nothing is perceived to reprove your impiety, but something to give it additional boldness, and to swell it to a fearless daring. So, in every age, the gay and thoughtless have afforded to each other encouragement, and communicated a vicious contagion. One generation of thoughtless sinners is swept off to that state, from which they are not permitted to return and give warning to survivors. The latter follow their predecessors both in character and destiny. In this connexion, one cannot avoid being struck with the following thought recently presented in a popular work. Speaking of a celebrated actor, delivering before a crowded theatre, the soliloquy of Hamlet on death, and on the dreadful uncertainty of those scenes, which follow, "He was one man," says the author, "among two thousand silent spectators, interrogating thought concerning the destiny of mortals." It is added, "In a few years all that was there, will exist no longer; but others will assist in their turn, at the same uncertainties, and will plunge in like manner into the abyss, without knowing its depth."

That youth affords any security against the invasion of death, is an opinion which no person can deliberately entertain. At some times, and under certain circumstances, such a thought would be peculiarly absurd. The providence of God, in regard to this seminary, has been so ordered, as to prevent, one would think, the possibility of an imagination so groundless. Could you have attended the dying beds of those, who either as

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members, or graduates of this College, have closed their probationary state, would it have appeared to you, either that youth is invulnerable, or that it cancels the obligations of religion? You once knew them;—you once conversed familiarly with them;—you have seen some of them gradually wasted by disease; but you will see them no more. In what light did they view that alienation from God, which you seem to claim as a rich immunity? Is life more at your command than it was at theirs? And do you know, that within a single year, your own death will not be held up as a warning to others?

And now, to use the words of one, who himself knew the value of religion, and earnestly labored, that others might experience both its influence and rewards: "I beseech you by the affection, with which all, who love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity, long to see you brought back to him; I beseech you by the friendship of the living, and by the memory of the dead; by the ruin of those, who have trifled away their days, and have perished in their sins; and by the happiness of those who have embraced the Gospel and are saved by it; I beseech you by the great expectations of that important day, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven; by the terrors of a dissolving world; by the sound of the arch-angel's trumpet; and by that infinitely more awful sentence: Come, ye blessed, and depart, ye cursed, with which the grand solemnity shall close;

"I beseech you finally by your own precious and immortal souls; by the sure prospect of a dying bed, or of a sudden surprise into the invisible state; and as you would feel one ray of comfort in your departing spirit, when your flesh and your heart are failing; I beseech you by your own personal appearance before the tribunal of Christ; by all the transports of the blessed, and by all the agonies of the damned, the one or other of which must be your everlasting portion; I affectionately beseech and entreat you, in the strength of all these united considerations, as you will answer it to your conscience, as you will answer it to the Eternal Judge, that you dismiss not

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these thoughts, these meditations, and these cares, till you have brought the matter to a happy issue; till you have made a resolute choice of Christ, and his appointed way of salvation, and till you have solemnly devoted yourselves to God in the bonds of an everlasting covenant." (Doddridge.)

END OF VOL. I.

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